SERMONS AND DISCOURSES:

Some of which

Never before Printed.

BY

JOHN TILLOTSON, *D.D.*
Dean of St. *Pauls*, Preacher to the Honourable Society of *Lincolns-Inn*, and one of His Majesty's Chaplains in Ordinary.

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IMPRIMATUR,

C. Alston. November 17. 1685.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

Honourable House of Commons,

Novemb. 5. 1678.

LUKE IX. 55, 56.

But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; For the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.

AMONG many other things, which may justly recommend the *Christian Religion* to the approbation of mankind, the intrinsick goodness of it is most apt to

make impreſſion upon the Minds of ſerious and conſiderate men. The Miracles of it are the great external evidence and confirmation of its Truth and Divinity; but the morality of its Doctrines and Precepts, ſo agreeable to the beſt reaſon and wiſeſt apprehenſions of mankind, ſo admirably fitted for the perfecting of our natures, and the ſweetning of the ſpirits and tempers of Men, ſo friendly to human Society and every way ſo well calculated for the peace and order of the World. Theſe are the things which our Religion glories in as her crown and excellency. *Miracles* are apt to awaken and aſtoniſh, and by a ſenſible and overpowering evidence to bear down the prejudices of Infidelity; but there are ſecret charms in *goodneſs* which take faſt hold of the hearts of men and do inſenſibly, but effectually, command our love and eſteem.

And ſurely nothing can be more proper to the occaſion of this Day, than a Diſcourſe upon this Argument; which ſo directly tends to correct that unchriſtian ſpirit, and miſtaken zeal, which hath been the cauſe of all our troubles and confuſions, and had ſo powerful an influence upon that horrid Tragedy which

which was designed, now near upon fourscore years ago, to have been acted as upon this Day.

And that we may the better understand the reason of our Saviour's reproof here in the Text, it will be requisite to consider the occasion of this hot and furious zeal which appeared in some of his Disciples. And that was this; Our Saviour was going from *Galilee* to *Jerusalem*, and being to pass through a Village of *Samaria* he sent messengers before him to prepare entertainment for him; but the People of that Place would not receive him, because he was going to *Jerusalem*: the Reason whereof was, the *difference of Religion* which then was between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*. Of which I shall give you this brief account.

The *Samaritans* were originally that Colony of the *Assyrians*, which we find in the Book of *Kings* was, upon the Captivity of the Ten Tribes, planted in *Samaria* by *Salmanassar*. They were Heathens, and worshipped their own Idols, till they were so infested with Lions, that for the redress of this mischief they desired to be instructed in the worship of the God of *Israel*, hoping by this means to

appeaſe the anger of the God of the Country; and then they worſhipped the God of *Iſrael* together with their own Idols; for ſo it is ſaid in the Hiſtory of the *Kings*, That *they feared the Lord, and ſerved their own Gods*.

After the Tribe of *Judah* were returned from the Captivity of *Babylon*, and the Temple of *Jeruſalem* was rebuilt, all the *Jews* were obliged by a ſolemn Covenant to put away their *Heathen* Wives. It happened that *Manaſſes*, a *Jewiſh* Prieſt, had married the Daughter of *Sanballat* the *Samaritan*; and being unwilling to put away his Wife, *Sanballat* excited the *Samaritans* to build a Temple upon Mount *Gerizim* near the City of *Samaria*, in oppoſition to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and made *Manaſſes* his Son-in-law, Prieſt there.

Upon the building of this new Temple there aroſe a great feud between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, which in proceſs of time grew to ſo violent a hatred that they would not ſo much as ſhew common civility to one another. And this was the reaſon why the *Samaritans* would not receive our Saviour in his journey, becauſe they perceived he was going to worſhip at *Jeruſalem*.

At

At this uncivil uſage of our Saviour, *two* of his Diſciples, *James* and *John*, preſently take fire, and out of a well-meaning zeal for the honour of their Maſter, and of the true God, and of *Jeruſalem* the true place of his worſhip, they are immediately for diſpatching out of the way theſe Enemies of God, and Chriſt, and the true Religion; theſe *Hereticks* and *Schiſmaticks*, for ſo they called one another. And to this end they deſire our Saviour to give them power to *call for fire from Heaven to conſume them*, as *Elias* had done in a like caſe, and that too not far from *Samaria*; and it is not improbable that their being ſo near the place where *Elias* had done the like before, might prompt them to this requeſt.

Our Saviour ſeeing them in this heat, notwithſtanding all the reaſons they pretended for their paſſion, and for all they ſheltered themſelves under the great Example of *Elias*, doth very calmly but ſeverely reprove this temper of theirs, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of: for the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them.*

Grotius obſerves, that theſe two excellent Sentences are left out in a *Manuſcript* that

that is in *England.* I cannot tell what *Manuſcript* he refers to, but if it were a Copy written out in the height of Popery, no wonder if ſome zealous Tranſcriber offended at this paſſage, ſtruck it out of the Goſpel, being confident our Saviour would not ſay any thing, that was ſo directly contrary to the current Doctrine and Practice of thoſe times. But thanks be to God, this admirable *Saying* is ſtill preſerv'd, and can never be made uſe of upon a fitter occaſion.

Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of: That is, Ye own your ſelves to be my Diſciples, but do you conſider what ſpirit now acts and governs you; Not *that* ſurely which my Doctrine deſigns to mould and faſhion you into, which is not a furious and perſecuting and deſtructive ſpirit, but mild and gentle and ſaving; tender of the lives and intereſts of men, even of thoſe who are our greateſt Enemies: You ought to conſider, That you are not now under the rough and ſowr Diſpenſation of the Law, but the calm and peaceable Inſtitution of the Goſpel; to which the ſpirit of *Elias*, though he was a very good man in his time, would be altogether unſuitable. God permitted it then, under that imper-

imperfect way of Religion, but now under the Gospel it would be intolerable: For that designs universal love, and peace, and good-will: and now no difference of Religion, no pretence of zeal for God and Christ can warrant and justifie this passionate and fierce, this vindictive and exterminating spirit.

For the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them. He says indeed elsewhere, that he *was not come to send Peace, but a Sword*; which we are not to understand of the natural tendency of his Religion, but of the accidental event and effect of it, through the malice and perverseness of men: But here he speaks of the proper intention and design of his coming: *He* came not to kill and destroy, but *for the healing of the Nations*; for the salvation and redemption of Mankind, not onely *from the wrath to come*, but from a great part of the evils and miseries of this life: *He* came to discountenance all fierceness and rage and cruelty in men, one towards another; to restrain and subdue that furious and unpeaceable Spirit, which is so troublesome to the world, and the cause of so many mischiefs and disorders in it: And to introduce a Religion which consults

not

not only the eternal Salvation of mens ſouls, but their temporal peace and ſecurity, their comfort and happineſs in this world.

The *words* thus explained contain this Obſervation, *That a revengeful and cruel and deſtructive Spirit, is directly contrary to the deſign and temper of the Goſpel, and not to be excuſed upon any pretence of zeal for God and Religion.*

In the proſecution of this Argument, I ſhall confine my Diſcourſe to theſe *Three* heads.

Firſt, To ſhew the oppoſition of this ſpirit to the true Spirit and deſign of the Chriſtian Religion.

Secondly, The unjuſtifiableneſs of it upon any pretence of zeal for God and Religion.

Thirdly, To apply this Diſcourſe to the occaſion of this Day.

I. *Firſt*, I ſhall ſhew *the oppoſition of this ſpirit to the true Spirit and deſign of the Chriſtian Religion:* That it is directly oppoſite to the main and fundamental *Precepts* of the Goſpel, and to the great *Patterns* and Examples of our Religion, our

our *Bleſſed Saviour* and the *Primitive Chriſtians.*

1. This ſpirit which our Saviour here reproves in his Diſciples, is directly oppoſite to the main and fundamental *Precepts* of the Goſpel; which command us to *love one another*, and *to love all men*, even our very *enemies*; and are ſo far from permitting us to perſecute thoſe who hate us, that they forbid us to hate thoſe who perſecute us: They require us to be *merciful as our Father which is in Heaven is merciful*; to be *kind* and *tender-hearted*, *forbearing one another*, *and forgiving one another*, *if any man have a quarrel againſt any*, *even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven us*: And *to put on as the elect of God*, *bowels of mercy*, *meekneſs and long-ſuffering*, and to *follow peace with all men*, and to *ſhew all meekneſs to all men*; and particularly the Paſtors and Governors of the Church are eſpecially charged to be of this temper, *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive*, *but be gentle unto all men*; *apt to teach*, *in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*, *if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.* To all which *Precepts*, and many more that I might reckon up, nothing

thing can be more plainly oppoſite than inhumane Cruelties and Perſecutions, treacherous Conſpiracies and bloody Maſſacres, a barbarous Inquiſition, and a *holy League* to extirpate all that differ from us. And inſtead of *inſtructing in meekneſs thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*, to convert men with fire and faggot, and to teach them as *Gideon* did the *men of Succoth with briars and thorns*; and inſtead of waiting for their repentance, and endeavouring to recover them out of the ſnare of the Devil, to put them quick into his hands, and to diſpatch them to Hell as faſt as is poſſible. If the precepts of Chriſtianity can be contradicted, ſurely it cannot be done more groſly and palpably than by ſuch practiſes.

2. This ſpirit is likewiſe directly oppoſite to the great *Paterns* and Examples of our Religion, *our Bleſſed Saviour*, and the *Primitive Chriſtians*. It was propheſied of our *Saviour* that he ſhould be *the Prince of peace*, and ſhould make it one of his great buſineſſes upon earth, to make Peace in Heaven and Earth, to reconcile Men to God and to one another, to take up all thoſe feuds and to extinguiſh all thoſe animoſities that were in the World; to bring to agreement and a peace-

peaceable demeanour one towards another thoſe that were moſt diſtant in their tempers and intereſts, to *make the lamb and the wolf lie down together, that there might be no more deſtroying nor devouring in all God's holy mountain; that is,* that *that* cruel and deſtructive ſpirit which prevail'd before in the world ſhould then be baniſhed out of all Chriſtian ſocieties.

And in conformity to theſe predictions, when our Saviour was born into the world the Angels ſang that heavenly *Anthem, Glory to God in the higheſt, peace on earth, and good will among men.* And when he appeared in the world his whole life and carriage was gentle and peaceable, full of meekneſs and charity. His great buſineſs was to be beneficial to others, to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt; *he went about doing good,* to the bodies and to the ſouls of men: his miracles were not deſtructive to mankind, but healing and charitable. He could, if he had pleaſed, by his miraculous power have confounded his enemies, and have thundred out death and deſtruction againſt the Infidel world, as his pretended *Vicar* hath ſince done againſt Hereticks. But intending that his Religion ſhould be propa-

propagated in human ways, and that Men ſhould be drawn to the profeſſion of it by the *bands of love* and the *cords of a man*, by the gentle and peaceable methods of Reaſon and Perſwaſion; he gave no example of a furious zeal and religious rage againſt thoſe who deſpiſed his Doctrine. It was propounded to men for their great advantage, and they rejected it at their utmoſt peril. It ſeemed good to the Author of this inſtitution to compell no man to it by temporal puniſhments. When he went about making proſelytes he offered violence to no man, only ſaid, *If any man will be my diſciple, If any man will come after me.* And when his diſciples were leaving him he does not ſet up an Inquiſition to torture and puniſh them for their defecton from the faith, only ſays, *Will ye alſo go away?*

And in imitation of this bleſſed Patern the Chriſtian Church continued to ſpeak and act for ſeveral Ages. And this was the language of the holy Fathers, *Lex nova non ſe vindicat ultore gladio*, the Chriſtian Law doth not avenge it ſelf by the Sword. This was then the ſtyle of Councils, *Nemini ad credendum vim inferre*, to offer violence to no man to compell him to the Faith. I proceed in the

Second

Second place, to ſhew the *Unjuſtifiableneſs of this ſpirit upon any pretence whatſoever of zeal for God and Religion.* No caſe can be put with Circumſtances of greater advantage and more likely to juſtify this ſpirit and temper, than the caſe here in the Text. Thoſe againſt whom the Diſciples would have *called for fire from Heaven,* were Hereticks and Schiſmaticks from the true Church; they had affronted our Saviour himſelf in his own perſon; the honour of God, and of that Religion which he had ſet up in the World, and of *Jeruſalem* which he had appointed for the place of his worſhip were all concerned in this caſe: ſo that if ever it were warrantable to put on this fierce and furious zeal, here was a caſe that ſeemed to require it: But even in theſe circumſtances our Saviour thinks fit to rebuke and diſcountenance this ſpirit, *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.* And he gives ſuch a reaſon as ought in all differences of Religion, how wide ſoever they be, to deter men from this temper, *For the Son of man is not come to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them*; that is, this Spirit is utterly inconſiſtent with the great deſign of Chriſtian II.

Religion, and the end of our Saviour's coming into the world.

And now, what hath the Church of *Rome* to plead for her cruelty to men for the cauſe of Religion, which the Diſciples might not much better have pleaded for themſelves in their caſe? what hath ſhe to ſay againſt thoſe who are the objects of her cruelty and perſecution, which would not have held againſt the *Samaritans?* Does ſhe practice theſe ſeverities out of a zeal for truth, and for the honour of God, and Chriſt, and the true Religion? Why, upon theſe very accounts it was, that the Diſciples would have called for *fire from Heaven* to have deſtroyed the *Samaritans.* Is the Church of *Rome* perſwaded that thoſe whom ſhe perſecutes are Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, and that no puniſhment can be too great for ſuch offenders? So the Diſciples were perſwaded of the *Samaritans*; and upon much better grounds: Only the Diſciples had ſome excuſe in their caſe, which the Church of *Rome* hath not; and that was Ignorance: And this Apology our Saviour makes for them, *ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of:* They had been bred up in the Jewiſh Religion, which gave ſome indulgence to this

this kind of temper, and they were able to cite a great Example for themſelves; beſides, they were then but learners and not throughly inſtructed in the Chriſtian Doctrine. But in the Church of *Rome*, whatever the caſe of particular perſons may be, as to the whole Church and the Governing part of it, this ignorance is wilful and affected, and therefore inexcuſable. For the Chriſtian Religion, which they profeſs to embrace, does as plainly teach the contrary as it does any other matter whatſoever: and it is not more evident in the new Teſtament that Chriſt died for ſinners, than that Chriſtians ſhould not kill one another for the misbelief of any Article of *revealed* Religion; much leſs for the disbelief of ſuch Articles as are *invented* by men, and impoſed as the Doctrines of Chriſt.

You have heard what kind of *Spirit* it is, which our Saviour here reproves in his Diſciples. It was a furious and deſtructive *Spirit*, contrary to Chriſtian charity and goodneſs. But yet this may be ſaid in mitigation of their fault, that they themſelves offered no violence to their enemies: They left it to God, and no doubt would have been very glad that he would have manifeſted his ſeve-

rity upon them, by ſending down *fire from Heaven* to have conſumed them.

But there is a much worſe *Spirit* than this in the world, which is not only contrary to *Chriſtianity*, but to the common Principles of *Natural Religion*, and even to *Humanity* it ſelf: Which by falſhood and perfidiouſneſs, by ſecret plots and conſpiracies, or by open ſedition and rebellion, by an Inquiſition or Maſſacre, by depoſing and killing Kings, by fire and ſword, by the ruine of their Country, and betraying it into the hands of Foreigners; and in a word, by diſſolving all the bonds of humane Society, and ſubverting the peace and order of the World, *that is*, by all the wicked ways imaginable doth incite men to promote and advance their Religion. As if all the world were made for *them*, and there were not only no other Chriſtians, but no other Men beſides themſelves; as *Babylon* of old proudly vaunted, *I am, and there is none beſides me*: And as if the God, whom the Chriſtians worſhip, were not *the God of order but of confuſion*; as if he whom we call *the Father of mercies*, were delighted with cruelty, and could not have a more pleaſing ſacrifice offered to him than a Maſſacre, nor put a greater

honour

honour upon his Prieſts than to make them Judges of an Inquiſition, *that is*, the Inventors and decreers of torments for men more righteous and innocent than themſelves.

Thus to miſrepreſent God and Religion, is to deveſt them of all their Majeſty and Glory. For if that of *Seneca* be true, that *ſine bonitate nulla majeſtas*, *without Goodneſs there can be no ſuch thing as Majeſty*, then to ſeparate *goodneſs* and *mercy* from God, *compaſſion* and *charity* from Religion, is to make the *two* beſt things in the world, *God* and *Religion*, good for nothing.

How much righter apprehenſions had the *Heathen* of the *Divine Nature*, which they looked upon as ſo benign and beneficial to mankind, that (as *Tully* admirably ſays) *Dii immortales ad uſum hominum fabrefacti penè videantur*, *The nature of the immortal Gods may almoſt ſeem to be exactly framed for the benefit and advantage of men.* And as for *Religion*, they always ſpake of it as the great band of humane Society, and the foundation of truth, and fidelity, and juſtice among men. But when Religion once comes to ſupplant moral Righteouſneſs, and to teach men the abſurdeſt things in the

world, *to lye for the truth, and to kill men for God's ſake*: when it ſerves to no other purpoſe, but to be a bond of conſpiracy, to inflame the tempers of men to a greater fierceneſs, and to ſet a keener edge upon their ſpirits, and to make them *ten times more the children of wrath* and Cruelty *than they were by nature*, then ſurely it loſes its nature and ceaſes to be *Religion*: For let any man ſay worſe of *Atheiſm* and *Infidelity*, if he can. And, for God's ſake, what is Religion good for, but to reform the manners and diſpoſitions of men, to reſtrain humane nature from violence and cruelty, from falſhood and treachery, from Sedition and Rebellion? Better it were there were no *revealed* Religion, and that humane nature were left to the conduct of its own principles and inclinations, which are much more mild and merciful, much more for the peace and happineſs of humane Society; than to be acted by a Religion that inſpires men with ſo wild a fury, and prompts them to commit ſuch outrages: and is continually ſupplanting Government, and undermining the welfare of mankind; in ſhort, ſuch a Religion as teaches men to propagate and advance it ſelf by *means* ſo evidently con-

contrary to the very *nature* and *end* of all Religion.

And this, if it be well conſidered, will appear to be a very convincing way of reaſoning, by ſhewing the laſt reſult and conſequence of ſuch Principles, and of ſuch a Train of Propoſitions, to be a moſt groſs and palpable abſurdity. *For example*, We will at preſent admit *Popery* to be the true Religion, and their Doctrines of *extirpating Hereticks*, of the lawfulneſs of *depoſing Kings*, and ſubverting Government by all the cruel and wicked ways that can be thought of, to be, as in truth they are, the Doctrines of this Religion: In this Caſe, I would not trouble my ſelf to debate particulars; but if in the groſs, and upon the whole matter it be evident that ſuch a Religion as this is as bad or worſe than Infidelity and no Religion, this is conviction enough to a wiſe man, and as good as a Demonſtration, that this is not the true Religion, and that it cannot be from God.

How much better Teachers of Religion were the old *Heathen Philoſophers*? In all whoſe Books and Writings there is not one Principle to be found of Treachery or Rebellion; nothing that gives the leaſt countenance to an *Aſſociation*

or a Maſſacre, to the betraying of ones Native Country, or the cutting of his Neighbours throat for difference in opinion. I ſpeak it with grief and ſhame, becauſe the credit of our common Chriſtianity is ſomewhat concerned in it, that *Panætius* and *Antipatur* and *Diogenes* the *Stoick*, *Tully* and *Plutarch* and *Seneca* were much honeſter and more Chriſtian *Caſuiſts*, than the *Jeſuits* are, or the generality of the *Caſuiſts* of any other *Order*, that I know of, in the Church of *Rome*. I come now in the

III. *Third* and laſt place, to make ſome *Application* of this Diſcourſe.

1. Let not Religion ſuffer for thoſe faults and miſcarriages which really proceed from the ignorance of Religion, and from the want of it. That under colour and pretence of Religion, very bad things are done, is no argument that Religion it ſelf is not good: Becauſe the beſt things are liable to be perverted and abuſed to very ill purpoſes, nay *the corruption of them is commonly the worſt*; as, they ſay, the richeſt and nobleſt Wines make the ſharpeſt Vinegar. *If the light that is in you*, ſaith our Saviour, *be dark-*

darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?

2. Let us beware of that *Church* which countenanceth this *unchriſtian ſpirit* here condemned by our Saviour; and which teaches ſuch *Doctrines*, and warrants ſuch *Practices* as are conſonant thereto. You all know, without my ſaying ſo, that I mean the *Church* of *Rome*; in which are taught ſuch *Doctrines* as theſe, That Hereticks, *that is*, all who differ from them in matters of Faith, are to be extirpated by fire and ſword; which was decreed in the *third* and *fourth Lateran* Councils, where all Chriſtians are ſtrictly charged to endeavour this to the uttermoſt of their power, *Sicut reputari cupiunt & haberi fideles, as they deſire to be eſteemed and accounted Chriſtians.* Next their *Doctrines of depoſing Kings*, and of *abſolving their ſubjects from obedience to them*; which were not only univerſally believed, but practiſed by the *Popes* and *Roman* Church for ſeveral Ages. Indeed this Doctrine hath not been at all times alike frankly and openly avowed, but it is undoubtedly theirs; and hath frequently been put in execution, though they have not thought it ſo convenient at all turns to make profeſſion of it. It is a certain kind of Engine, which is to be ſcrew'd up

or

or let down as occaſion ſerves; and is commonly kept like *Goliah*'s Sword in the *Sanctuary* behind the *Ephod*, but yet ſo that the *High-Prieſt* can lend it out upon an extraordinary occaſion.

And for *Practices* conſonant to theſe *Doctrines*, I ſhall go no further than the horrid and bloody *Deſign* of this *Day*. Such a *Myſtery* of Iniquity, as had been *hid from ages and generations*; Such a Maſter-piece of Villany, *as eye had not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor ever* before *entred into the heart of man*: So prodigiouſly Barbarous, both in the ſubſtance and circumſtances of it, as is not to be paralleld in all the voluminous Records of Time, from the foundation of the World.

Of late years our *Adverſaries* (for ſo they have made themſelves without any provocation of ours) have almoſt had the impudence to deny ſo plain a matter of fact; but I wiſh they have not taken an effectual courſe by freſh Conſpiracies, of equal or greater horror, to confirm the belief of it with a witneſs. But I ſhall not anticipate what will be more proper for another *Day*, but confine my ſelf to the preſent Occaſion.

I will

I will not trouble you with the particular Narrative of this dark Conſpiracy, nor the obſcure manner of its diſcovery, which *Bellarmin* himſelf acknowledges not to have been *without a Miracle*. Let us thank God that it was ſo happily diſcovered and diſappointed, as I hope their preſent deſign will be by the ſame wonderful and merciful providence of God towards a moſt unworthy People. And may the *lameneſs* and *halting* of *Ignatius Loyola*, the Founder of the *Jeſuits*, never depart from that *Order*, but be a *Fate* continually attending all their villanous Plots and Contrivances.

I ſhall only obſerve to you, that after the diſcovery of this Plot the Authors of it were not convinced of the evil, but ſorry for the miſcarriage of it. Sir *Everard Digby*, whoſe very original Papers and Letters are now in my hands, after he was in Priſon, and knew he muſt ſuffer, calls it *the beſt Cauſe*; and was extremely troubled to hear it *cenſured by Catholicks and Prieſts, contrary to his expectation, for a great ſin: Let me tell you*, ſays he, *what a grief it is, to hear THAT ſo much condemned, which I did believe would have been otherwiſe thought of by Catholicks*. And yet he concludes that

that *Letter* with theſe words: *In how full joy ſhould I dye, if I could do any thing for the Cauſe which I love more than my life?* And in another *Letter* he ſays, he could have ſaid ſomething to have mitigated the *odium* of this buſineſs, as to that Point of involving thoſe of his own Religion in the common ruine, *I dare not* (ſays he) *take that courſe that I could, to make it appear leſs odious, for divers were to have been brought out of danger, who now would rather hurt them than otherwiſe. I do not think there would have been three worth the ſaving, that ſhould have been loſt.* And as to the reſt, that were to have been ſwallowed up in that deſtruction, he ſeems not to have the leaſt relenting in his mind about them. All doubts he ſeems to have look'd upon as temptations, and *intreats* his Friends *to pray for the pardoning of his not ſufficient ſtriving againſt temptations ſince this buſineſs was undertook.*

Good God! that any thing that is called Religion, ſhould ſo perfectly ſtrip men of all humanity, and transform the mild and gentle race of mankind into ſuch Wolves and Tygers: that ever a pretended zeal for Thy glory ſhould inſtigate men to diſhonour Thee at ſuch a rate!

rate! It is believed by many, and not without cauſe, that the Pope and his Faction are the *Antichriſt*. I will ſay no more than I know in this matter; I am not ſo ſure that it is *he* that is particularly deſigned in Scripture by that Name, as I am of the main *Articles* of the Chriſtian Faith: But however that be, I challenge *Antichriſt* himſelf, whoever he be, and whenever he comes, to do worſe and wickeder things than theſe.

But I muſt remember my *Text*, and take heed of imitating that *Spirit* which is there condemned, whilſt I am inveighing againſt it. And in truth it almoſt looks uncharitably to ſpeak the truth in theſe matters, and barely to relate what theſe men have not bluſh'd to do. I need not, nay I cannot, aggravate theſe things; they are too horrible in themſelves, even when they are expreſs'd in the ſofteſt and gentleſt words.

I would not be underſtood to charge every particular perſon who is, or hath been in the *Roman* Communion, with the guilt of theſe or the like practices: But I muſt charge their Doctrines and Principles with them; I muſt charge the *Heads* of their Church, and the prevalent

teaching

teaching and *governing* part of it, who are uſually the contrivers and abetters, the executioners and applauders of theſe curſed Deſigns.

I do willingly acknowledge the great Piety and Charity of ſeveral perſons who have lived and died in that Communion, as *Eraſmus*, Father *Paul*, *Thuanus*, and many others; who had in truth more goodneſs than the Principles of that Religion do either incline men to, or allow of. And yet he that conſiders how univerſally almoſt the *Papiſts* in *Ireland* were engaged in that *Maſſacre*, which is ſtill freſh in our memories, will find it very hard to determine how many degrees of innocency and good nature, or of coldneſs and indifferency in Religion, are neceſſary to overballance the fury of a blind zeal and a miſguided Conſcience.

I doubt not but *Papiſts* are made like other men. Nature hath not generally given them ſuch ſavage and cruel diſpoſitions, but their Religion hath made them ſo. Whereas true Chriſtianity is not only the beſt, but the beſt-natur'd Inſtitution in the world; and ſo far as any Church is departed from good nature, and become cruel and barbarous, ſo far

is it degenerated from Christianity. I am loth to say it, and yet I am confident 'tis very true, That many *Papists* would have been excellent Persons and very good Men, if their Religion had not hindered them; if the Doctrines and Principles of their Church had not perverted and spoiled their natural Dispositions.

I speak not this to exasperate *You, worthy Patriots and the great Bulwark of our Religion*, to any *unreasonable* or *unnecessary*, much less *unchristian* Severities against them: No, let us not do like them; let us never do any thing for Religion that is contrary to it: But I speak it to awaken your care thus far, That if their *Priests* will always be putting these pernicious Principles into the minds of the *People*, effectual Provision may be made, that it may never be in their Power again to put them in Practice. We have found by Experience, that ever since the *Reformation* they have been continually pecking at the Foundations of our Peace and Religion: When God knows we have been so far from thirsting after their Blood, that we did not so much as desire their disquiet but in order to our own necessary safety, and indeed to theirs.

And

And God be praiſed for thoſe matchleſs Inſtances which we are able to give of the generous humanity and Chriſtian temper of the *Engliſh Proteſtants*. After Q. *Marys* Death, when the Proteſtant Religion was reſtored, Biſhop *Bonner* notwithſtanding all his Cruelties and Butcheries was permitted quietly to live and dye amongſt us. And after the *Treaſon* of this *Day*, nay at this very time ſince the diſcovery of ſo barbarous a Deſign, and the higheſt Provocation in the world, by the treacherous Murder of one of His *Majeſty*'s Juſtices of the Peace, a very good Man and a moſt excellent Magiſtrate, who had been active in the diſcovery of this Plot; I ſay, after all this, and notwithſtanding the continued and inſupportable inſolence of their Carriage and Behaviour, even upon this occaſion, no Violence, nay not ſo much as any incivility, that I ever heard of, hath been offer'd to any of them. I would to God they would but ſeriouſly conſider this one difference between *our* Religion and *theirs*, and which of them comes neareſt to *the wiſdom which is from above*, which is *peaceable*, and *gentle*, and *full of mercy*. And I do heartily pray, and have good hopes, that upon this occaſion God will

open

open their eyes ſo far, as to convince a great many among them, that *that* cannot be the true Religion which inſpires men with ſuch barbarous minds.

I have now done, and if I have been tranſported upon this Argument ſomewhat beyond my uſual temper, the Occaſion of this *Day*, and our preſent circumſtances will, I hope, bear me out. I have expreſſed my ſelf all along with a juſt ſenſe, and with no unjuſt ſeverity, concerning theſe horrid Principles and Practices; but yet with great pity and tenderneſs towards thoſe miſerably ſeduced Souls, who have been deluded by them, and enſnared in them. And I can truly ſay, as the *Roman* Orator did of himſelf upon another occaſion, *Me natura miſericordem, patria ſeverum, crudelem nec patria nec natura eſſe voluit.* My nature inclines me to be tender and compaſſionate; a hearty zeal for our Religion, and concernment for the publick welfare of my Country, may perhaps have made me a little ſevere; but neither my natural diſpoſition, nor the temper of the *Engliſh* Nation, nor the *Genius* of the *Proteſtant, that is* the true *Chriſtian* Religion, will allow me to be cruel.

For the future, Let us *encourage our*

ſelves in the Lord our God; and *commit* our Cauſe, and *the keeping of our Souls to Him in well doing:* And, under God, let us leave it to the wiſdom and care of His *Majeſty*, and His two Houſes of Parliament, to make a laſting Proviſion for the ſecurity of our Peace and Religion, againſt all the ſecret contrivances and open attempts of *theſe ſons of violence.* And let us remember thoſe words of *David*, Pſal. 37. 12, 13, 14, 15. *The wicked plotteth againſt the juſt, and gnaſheth upon him with his teeth: The Lord ſhall laugh at him, for he ſeeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the ſword, and bent their bow, to caſt down the poor and needy, and to ſlay ſuch as be of upright converſation: Their ſword ſhall enter into their own heart, and their bows ſhall be broken.*

And I hope, conſidering what God hath heretofore done, and hath now begun to do for us, we may take encouragement to our ſelves againſt all the Enemies of our Religion, which are confederated againſt us, in the words of the Prophet, *Iſa.* 8. 9, 10. *Aſſociate your ſelves, O ye People, and ye ſhall be broken in pieces, and give ear, all ye of far Countries: Gird your ſelves, and ye ſhall be broken*

broken in pieces: Gird your ſelves, and yē ſhall be broken in pieces: Take counſel together, and it ſhall come to nought? Speak the word and it ſhall not ſtand. FOR GOD IS WITH US.

And now what remains, but to make our moſt devout and thankful acknowledgments to *Almighty God*, for the invaluable bleſſing of our *Reformed* Religion, and for the miraculous *Deliverance* of this *Day*, and for the wonderful *Diſcovery* of the late horrid and barbarous *Conſpiracy* againſt our *Prince*, our *Peace*, and our *Religion*.

To Him *therefore, our moſt gracious and merciful God, our* Shield, *and our* Rock, *and our mighty* Deliverer: *Who hath* brought us out of the land of *Egypt*, and out of the Houſe of bondage; *and hath ſet us free from* Popiſh *Tyranny and Superſtition*, a yoke which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear.

Who hath, from time to time, delivered us from the bloody and mercileſs deſigns of wicked and unreaſonable men; *and hath render'd all the plots and contrivances, the miſchievous* counſels and devices *of theſe* worſe-than-Heathens, *of none effect.*

Who did as upon this Day, *reſcue our* King *and our* Princes, *our* Nobles *and the* Heads of our Tribes, *the* Governours *of our* Church *and the* Judges *of the* Land, *from that fearful Deſtruction which was ready to have ſwallowed them up.*

Who ſtill brings to light the hidden things of darkneſs, *and hath hitherto preſerved our* Religion *and* Civil *intereſts to us, in deſpight of all the malicious and reſtleſs attempts of our Adverſaries.*

Unto that great God, *who hath done ſo great things for us, and hath ſaved us by a mighty* Salvation: *Who* hath delivered us, and doth deliver us, and, we truſt, will ſtill deliver us: *be glory and honour, thankſgiving and praiſe, from generation to generation.* And let all the people ſay, *Amen.*

A SER-

A

SERMON

PREACHED

At the First general Meeting of the Gentlemen and others born within the County of *YORK*.

To my Honoured

FRIENDS and COUNTREYMEN,

Mr. { *Hugh Frankland,* *Leonard Robinſon,* *Abrah. Fothergill,* *William Fairfax,* *Thomas Johnſon,* *John Hardeſty,* } Mr. { *Gervas Wilcockes,* *George Pickering,* *Edward Duffeild,* *John Topham,* *James Longbotham,* *Nathan. Holroyd.* }

Stewards of the YORKSHIRE Feaſt.

GENTLEMEN,

THIS Sermon, *which was firſt Preached, and is now Publiſhed at your deſires, I dedicate to your* Names, *to whoſe prudence and care the direction and management of this firſt general* Meeting *of our Countrymen was committed; Heartily wiſhing that it may be ſome way ſerviceable to the healing of*

our unhappy Differences, and the reſtoring of Unity and Charity among Chriſtians, eſpecially thoſe of the Proteſtant Reform'd Religion. I am

Gentlemen,

Your affectionate Countrey-man

and humble Servant,

Jo. Tillotſon.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

At the first general Meeting of the Gentlemen, and others, in and near *London*, who were born within the County of *York*.

JOHN XIII. 34, 35.

A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another: By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.

AS the Christian Religion in general, is the best Philosophy and most perfect Institution of Life; containing in it the most entire and compleat System of moral Rules and Precepts that was ever yet extant in the World:

World: ſo it peculiarly excells in the Doctrine of *Love* and *Charity*; earneſtly recommending, ſtrictly enjoyning, and vehemently and almoſt perpetually preſſing and inculcating the excellency and neceſſity of this beſt of Graces and Virtues; and propounding to us for our imitation and encouragement, the moſt lively and heroical Example of kindneſs and charity, that ever was, in the Life and Death of the great Founder of our Religion, *the author and finiſher of our Faith, Jeſus* the Son of God.

So that the Goſpel, as it hath in all other parts of our Duty cleared the dimneſs and obſcurity of *natural* light and ſupplied the imperfections of former *Revelations*, ſo doth it moſt eminently reign and triumph in this great and bleſſed virtue of *Charity*; in which all the Philoſophy and Religions that had been before in the World, whether *Jewiſh* or *Pagan*, were ſo remarkably defective.

With great reaſon then doth our bleſſed Saviour call this *a new Commandment*, and aſſert it to himſelf as a thing peculiar to his Doctrine and Religion; conſidering how imperfectly it had been taught, and how little it had been practiſed in the World before: *A new Commandment I*

give

give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another: By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.

I ſhall reduce my Diſcourſe upon theſe *Words* under theſe ſix Heads.

Firſt, To inquire in what ſenſe our Saviour calls this Commandment of loving one another *a new Commandment*.

Secondly, To declare to you the nature of this Commandment, by inſtancing in the chief Acts and Properties of Love.

Thirdly, To conſider the degrees and meaſures of our Charity with regard to the ſeveral Objects about which it is exerciſed.

Fourthly, Our obligation to this Duty not only from our Saviour's Authority, but likewiſe from our own Nature, and from the Reaſonableneſs and Excellency of the thing commanded.

Fifthly, The great *Example* which is here propounded to our imitation; *as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.*

Sixthly,

Sixthly and Laſtly, the Place and Rank which this Precept holds in the Chriſtian Religion. Our Saviour makes it the proper badge of a *Diſciple*, the diſtinctive mark and character of our Profeſſion; *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.*

I. I. *In what ſenſe our Saviour calls this Commandment of loving one another a new Commandment*; Not that it is abſolutely and altogether *New*, but upon ſome ſpecial accounts. For it is a branch of the ancient and primitive Law of Nature. *Ariſtotle* truly obſerves that upon grounds of natural kindred and likeneſs *all men are friends*, and kindly diſpoſed towards one another. And it is a known Precept of the *Jewiſh* Religion, to *love our Neighbour as our ſelves.*

In ſome ſenſe then, it is *no new Commandment*; and ſo St. *John*, who was moſt likely to underſtand our Saviour's meaning in this particular, (all his preaching and writing being almoſt nothing elſe but an inculcating of this one Precept) explains this matter, telling us that in ſeveral reſpects it was, and it was not *a new Commandment*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 7, 8. *Brethren, I write no new Commandment unto*

to

to you, but that which ye had from the beginning, that is, from ancient Times: But then he corrects himſelf; *Again* πάλιν, *but yet, a new Commandment I write unto you.* So that though it was not abſolutely *new*, yet upon divers conſiderable accounts it was ſo, and in a peculiar manner proper to the *Evangelical* Inſtitution; and is in ſo expreſs and particular a manner aſcribed to the teaching of the *Holy Ghoſt*, which was conferr'd upon Chriſtians by the Faith of the Goſpel, as if there hardly needed any outward inſtruction and exhortation to that purpoſe, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 9. *But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your ſelves are* θεοδίδακτοι, *divinely taught and inſpired to love one another.*

This Commandment then of *loving one another* is by our Lord and Saviour ſo much enlarged as to the *Object* of it, beyond what either the *Jews* or *Heathens* did underſtand it to be, extending to all mankind, and even to our greateſt enemies; ſo greatly advanced and heightned as to the *Degree* of it, even to the laying down of our lives for one another; ſo effectually taught, ſo mightily encouraged, ſo very much urged and inſiſted upon,

upon, that it may very well be called a *new Commandment*: for though it was not altogether unknown to Mankind before, yet it was never ſo taught, ſo encouraged; never was ſuch an illuſtrious Example given of it, never ſo much weight and ſtreſs laid upon it by any Philoſophy or Religion that was before in the world.

II. II. I ſhall endeavour to declare to you the *Nature of this Commandment, or the Duty required by it.* And that will beſt be done, by inſtancing in the chief *Acts* and *Properties* of Love and Charity. As, *humanity* and kindneſs in all our carriage and behaviour towards one another; for Love ſmooths the diſpoſitions of men ſo that they are not apt to grate upon one another: Next, to *rejoyce* in the good and happineſs of one another, and to *grieve* at their evils and ſufferings; for Love unites the intereſts of men ſo as to make them affected with what happens to another as if it were in ſome ſort their own caſe: Then, to contribute as much as in us lies to the happineſs of one another, by relieving one anothers wants and redreſſing their misfortunes: Again, tenderneſs of their good name and reputation; a proneneſs to interpret all the words

words and actions of men to the beſt ſenſe; patience and forbearance towards one another; and when differences happen, to manage them with all poſſible calmneſs and kindneſs, and to be ready to forgive and to be reconciled to one another; to pray one for another; and if occaſion be, at leaſt if the publick good of Chriſtianity require it, to be ready to lay down our lives for our brethren, and to ſacrifice our ſelves for the furtherance of their Salvation.

III. We will conſider the *Degrees and meaſures of our Charity, with regard to the various Objects about which it is exerciſed.* III.

And as to the *negative* part of this Duty, it is to be extended equally towards all. We are not to hate or bear ill-will to any man, or to do him any harm or miſchief; *Love worketh no evil to his neighbour.* Thus much charity we are to exerciſe towards all without any exception, without any difference.

And as to the *poſitive* part of this Duty, we ſhould bear an univerſal good-will to all men, wiſhing every mans happineſs, and praying for it as heartily as for our own: And if we be ſincere herein, we

ſhall

ſhall be ready upon all occaſions to procure and promote the welfare of all men. But the outward acts and teſtimonies of our Charity neither can be actually extended to all, nor ought to be to all alike. We do not know the wants of all, and therefore our knowledg of perſons, and of their conditions doth neceſſarily limit the effects of our Charity within a certain compaſs; and of thoſe we do know, we can but relieve a ſmall part for want of ability. Whence it becomes neceſſary, that we ſet ſome rules to our ſelves for the more diſcreet ordering of our Charity; ſuch as theſe: Caſes of extremity ought to take place of all other. Obligations of Nature, and nearneſs of Relation, ſeem to challenge the next place. Obligations of kindneſs, and upon the account of benefits received, may well lay the next claim. And then the *Houſhould of Faith* is to be peculiarly conſidered. And after theſe, the merit of the perſons, and all circumſtances belonging to them, are to be weighed and valued: Thoſe who labour in an honeſt calling, but are oppreſs'd with their charge; thoſe who are fallen from a plentiful condition, eſpecially by misfortune, and the providence of God, without their own fault; thoſe who

who have relieved others, and have been eminently charitable and beneficial to mankind; and laſtly, thoſe whoſe viſible neceſſities and infirmities of body or mind, whether by age or by accident, do plead for them: All theſe do challenge our more eſpecial regard and conſideration.

IV. We will conſider *our Obligations to this Duty, not only from our Saviour's Authority, but likewiſe from our own Nature, and from the reaſonableneſs and Excellency of the thing commanded.* This is the Commandment of the *Son of God*, who came down from Heaven with full Authority to declare the Will of God to us. And this is peculiarly *His Commandment*, which he urgeth upon his Diſciples ſo earneſtly, and ſo as if he almoſt required nothing elſe in compariſon of this. *Joh.* 15. 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another*: And *verſ.* 17. *Theſe things I command you, that ye love one another.* As if this were the end of all his Precepts, and of his whole Doctrine, to bring us to the practice of this Duty. And ſo St. *John*, the *loving* and *beloved Diſciple*, ſpeaks of it as the great *Meſſage* which the Son of God was to deliver to mankind, 1 *Joh.* 3. 11. *This is the Meſſage which ye* IV.

have heard from the beginning, that ye ſhould love one another. And *ver.* 23. *This is his Commandment, that we ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment.* And *chap.* 4. v. 21. *This Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother alſo.*

But beſides the Authority of our Saviour, we have a precedent obligation to it from our own Nature, and from the Reaſonableneſs and Excellency of the thing it ſelf. The frame of our Nature diſpoſeth us to it, and our inclination to Society, in which there can be no pleaſure, no advantage, without mutual love and kindneſs. And *Equity* alſo calls for it, for that we our ſelves wiſh and expect kindneſs from others is conviction enough to us that we owe it to others. The fulfilling of this Law is the great perfection of our Natures, the advancement and enlargement of our Souls, the chief ornament and beauty of a great mind. It makes us like to God, the beſt and moſt perfect and happieſt Being, in that which is the prime excellency and happineſs and glory of the Divine Nature.

And the advantages of this temper are unſpeakable and innumerable. It freeth

our

our ſouls from thoſe unruly and Troubleſom and diſquieting Paſſions which are the great torment of our Spirits; from Anger and Envy, from Malice and Revenge, from Jealouſie and Diſcontent. It makes our minds calm and cheerful, and puts our ſouls into an eaſie poſture, and into good humour, and maintains us in the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of our ſelves: It preſerves men from many miſchiefs and inconveniences, to which enmity and ill-will do perpetually expoſe them: It is apt to make Friends, and to gain Enemies, and to render every condition either pleaſant, or eaſie, or tolerable to us. So that to love others, is the trueſt love to our ſelves, and doth redound to our own unſpeakable benefit and advantage in all reſpects.

It is a very conſiderable part of our Duty, and almoſt equall'd by our Saviour with the *firſt and great Commandment of the Law.* It is highly acceptable to God, moſt beneficial to others, and very comfortable to our ſelves. It is the eaſieſt of all Duties, and it makes all others eaſie; the pleaſure of it makes the pains to ſignifie nothing, and the delightful reflection upon it afterwards is a moſt ample reward of it. It is a Duty in every man's power

to perform, how ſtrait and indigent ſoever his fortune and condition be. The pooreſt man may be as charitable as a Prince; he may have as much kindneſs in his heart, though his hand cannot be ſo bountiful and munificent. Our Saviour inſtanceth in the giving of a *cup of cold water*, as a Charity that will be highly accepted and rewarded by God. And one of the moſt celebrated Charities that ever was, how ſmall was it for the matter of it, and yet how great in regard of the mind that gave it? I mean the Widows *two mites*, which ſhe *caſt into the Treaſury*: One could hardly give leſs, and yet none can give more, for ſhe gave *all that ſhe had*. All theſe excellencies and advantages of Love and Charity, which I have briefly recounted, are ſo many Arguments, ſo many obligations to the practice of this Duty.

V. V. We will conſider *the great Inſtance and Example which is here propounded to our imitation; As I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.* The Son of God's becoming man, his whole Life, his bitter Death and Paſſion, all that he did and all that he ſuffered, was one great and continued proof and evidence of his mighty

mighty love to mankind. The greateſt Inſtance of love among men, and that too but very rare, is for a Man *to lay down his life for another, for his Friend*; but the Son of God died for all mankind, and we were all his enemies. And ſhould we not chearfully imitate the Example of that great Love and Charity, the effects whereof are ſo comfortable, ſo beneficial, ſo happy to every one of us. Had he not loved us, and died for us, we had certainly periſh'd, we had been miſerable and undone to all eternity.

And to perpetuate this great Example of Charity, and that it might be always freſh in our memories, the great Sacrament of our Religion was on purpoſe inſtituted for the Commemoration of this great love of the Son of God, in laying down his life, and ſhedding his precious blood for the wicked and rebellious Race of mankind. But I have not time to enlarge upon this noble Argument as it deſerves.

VI. The *laſt* thing to be conſidered is *the place and rank which this Precept and Duty holds in the Chriſtian Religion.* Our bleſſed *Saviour* here makes it the proper badg and cogniſance of our Profeſſion; VI.

By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another. The different *Sects* among the *Jews* had ſome peculiar Character to diſtinguiſh them from one another: The *Scholars* of the ſeveral great *Rabbi*'s among them had ſome peculiar Sayings and Opinions, ſome Cuſtoms and Traditions whereby they were ſeverally known; And ſo likewiſe the *Diſciples* of *John* the *Baptiſt* were particularly remarkable for their great Auſterities. In alluſion to theſe diſtinctions of *Sects* and *Schools* among the *Jews*, our *Saviour* fixeth upon this mark and character whereby his *Diſciples* ſhould be known from the *Diſciples* of any other Inſtitution, *A mighty love and affection to one another.*

Other *Sects* were diſtinguiſh'd by little Opinions, or by ſome external Rites and Obſervances in Religion; but our *Saviour* pitcheth upon that which is the moſt real and ſubſtantial, the moſt large and extenſive, the moſt uſeful and beneficial, the moſt *humane* and the moſt *divine* quality of which we are capable.

This was his great Commandment to his Diſciples, before he left the World: This was the Legacy he left them, and the effect of his laſt Prayers for them:

And

And for this end, among others, he inſtituted the Sacrament of his bleſſed Body and Blood, to be a lively remembrance of his great Charity to mankind, and a perpetual bond of Love and Union amongſt his Followers.

And the *Apoſtles* of our Lord and Saviour do upon all occaſions recommend this to us, as a principal Duty and Part of our Religion; telling us, That *in Chriſt Jeſus*, that is, in the Chriſtian Religion, nothing will *avail*, no not *Faith* it ſelf, unleſs it be enlivened and *inſpired by Charity*; That *Love is the end of the Commandment*, τέλος δὲ παραγγελίας, the *end of the Evangelical declaration*, the firſt *Fruit of the Spirit*, the ſpring and root of all thoſe Graces and Virtues which concern our duty towards one another: That it is the *ſum* and abridgement, the accompliſhment and *fulfilling of the whole Law*: That without this, whatever we pretend to in Chriſtianity, *we are nothing*, and our *Religion is vain*: That this is the greateſt of all Graces and Virtues, greater than *Faith* and *Hope*; and of perpetual uſe and duration, *Charity never fails*.

And therefore they exhort us above all things to endeavour after it, as the Crown

of all other Virtues: *Above all things have fervent charity among your ſelves*, ſaith St. *Peter*: And St. *Paul*, having enumerated moſt other Chriſtian Virtues, exhorts us above all to ſtrive after this, *And above all theſe things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection.* This St. *John* makes one of the moſt certain ſigns of our love to God, and the want of it an undeniable argument of the contrary: *If a man ſay I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a lyar; for he who loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen? This* he declares to be one of the beſt evidences that we are in a ſtate of Grace and Salvation, *Hereby we know that we are paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren.*

So that well might our bleſſed Saviour chuſe this for the badge of his Diſciples, and make it the great Precept of the beſt and moſt perfect Inſtitution? Other things might have ſerved better for pomp and oſtentation, and have more gratified the Curioſity, or Enthuſiaſm, or Superſtition of mankind, but there is no quality in the World which upon a ſober and impartial conſideration is of a more ſolid and intrinſick value.

And in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, the

the Chriſtians were very eminent for this Vertue, and particularly noted for it; *Nobis notam inurit apud quoſdam, it is a mark and brand ſet upon us by ſome*, ſaith *Tertullian*; and he tells us that it was proverbially ſaid among the *Heathen, Behold how theſe Chriſtians love one another. Lucian*, that great ſcoffer at all Religion, acknowledgeth in behalf of Chriſtians, that this was the great Principle which *their Maſter* had inſtill'd into them: And *Julian*, the bittereſt Enemy that Chriſtianity ever had, could not forbear to propound to the *Heathen* for an example the charity of the *Galileans*, for ſo by way of reproach he calls the *Chriſtians*, *who* (ſays he) *gave up themſelves to humanity* and kindneſs; which he acknowledgeth to have been very much to the advantage and reputation of our Religion: And in the ſame *Letter* to *Arſacius*, the *Heathen* High Prieſt of *Galatia*, he gives this memorable Teſtimony of the *Chriſtians*, that their Charity was not limited and confin'd onely to themſelves, but extended even to their Enemies; which could not be ſaid either of the *Jews* or *Heathens*: His words are theſe, *It is a*

ſhame,

ſhame, that when the Jews *ſuffer none of theirs to beg, and the impious* Galileans *relieve not onely their own, but thoſe alſo of our Religion, that we onely ſhould be defective in ſo neceſſary a Duty.* By all which it is evident that Love and Charity is not onely the great Precept of our *Saviour*, but was in thoſe firſt and beſt Times the general practice of his Diſciples, and acknowledged by the *Heathens* as a very peculiar and remarkable quality in them.

The application I ſhall make of this Diſcourſe ſhall be threefold.

1. With relation to the Church of *Rome.*

2. With regard to our ſelves who profeſs the *Proteſtant* Reform'd Religion.

3. With a more particular reſpect to the occaſion of this Meeting.

I. *Firſt, With relation to the Church of Rome*: Which we cannot chuſe but think of, whenever we ſpeak of Charity and loving one another; eſpecially having had ſo late a diſcovery of their affection to us, and ſo conſiderable a teſtimony of the kindneſs and charity which they deſign'd towards us: ſuch as may juſtly *make the ears of all that hear it to tingle*, and render

Popery

Popery execrable and infamous; *a frightful* and a *hateful* thing to the end of the World.

It is now but too visible how grosly this great Commandment of our Saviour is contradicted, not only by the Practices of those in that Communion, from the *Pope* down to the meanest *Fryar*; but by the very Doctrines and Principles, by the *Genius* and Spirit of that Religion, which is wholly calculated for cruelty and persecution. Where now is that *mark* of a *Disciple*, so much insisted upon by our *Lord* and *Master*, to be found in that Church? And yet what is the *Christian* Church but the Society and Community of *Christ's Disciples*? Surely in all reason, that which our *Lord* made the distinctive Mark and Character of his *Disciples*, should be the principal mark of a *true Church*. *Bellarmine* reckons up no less than *fifteen* marks of the true Church, all which the Church of *Rome* arrogates to her self alone: But he wisely forgot that which is worth all the rest, and which our Saviour insists upon as the chief of all other, *A sincere Love and Charity to all Christians*: This he knew would by no means agree to his own Church.

But

But for all that, it is very reaſonable that Churches as well as particular Chriſtians ſhould be judged by their Charity. The Church of *Rome* would engroſs all Faith to her ſelf; Faith in its utmoſt perfection, to the degree and pitch of Infallibility; And they allow no body in the world, beſides themſelves, no though they believe all the Articles of the Apoſtles Creed, to have one grain of true Faith; becauſe they do not believe upon the Authority of their Church, which they pretend to be the only foundation of true Faith. This is a moſt arrogant and vain pretence; but admit it were true, yet in the Judgment of St. *Paul*, *Though they had all Faith, if they have not Charity, they are nothing.*

The greateſt wonder of all is this, that they who hate and perſecute Chriſtians moſt, do all this while the moſt confidently of all others pretend to be the Diſciples of Chriſt, and will allow none to be ſo but themſelves. *That* Church which excommunicates all other Chriſtian Churches in the world, and if ſhe could, would extirpate them out of the world, will yet needs aſſume to her ſelf to be the only Chriſtian Church: As if our Saviour had ſaid, *Hereby ſhall all men know*

know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye hate, and excommunicate, and kill one another. What ſhall be done unto thee, thou falſe tongue? thou empty and impudent pretence of Chriſtianity!

Secondly, *With relation to our ſelves, who profeſs the Proteſtant Reformed Religion.* How is this great Precept of our Saviour not only ſhamefully neglected, but plainly violated by us? And that not only by private hatred and ill-will, quarrels and contentions in our civil converſation and entercourſe with one another; but by moſt unchriſtian diviſions and animoſities in that common relation wherein we ſtand to one another, as *Brethren*, as *Chriſtians*, *as Proteſtants*. II.

Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? And are we not in a more peculiar and eminent manner *Brethren*, being *all the Children of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt*? Are we not all members of the ſame Body, and partakers of the ſame Spirit, and Heirs of the ſame bleſſed Hopes of eternal life?

So that being Bretheen upon ſo many accounts, and by ſo many bonds and endearments all united to one another, and all travelling towards the ſame heavenly Coun-

Country, *why do we fall out by the way, ſince we are Brethren?* Why do we not as becomes *Brethren*, dwell together in unity? but are ſo apt to quarrel and break out into heats, to crumble into Sects and Parties, to divide and ſeparate from one another upon every ſlight and trifling occaſion.

Give me leave a little more fully to expoſtulate this matter, but very calmly and *in the ſpirit of meekneſs*, and in the name of our dear *Lord* who loved us all at ſuch a rate as to die for us, to recommend to you this *new Commandment* of his, *that ye love one another*: Which is almoſt a *new Commandment* ſtill, and hardly the worſe for wearing; ſo ſeldom it is put on, and ſo little hath it been practiſed among Chriſtians for ſeveral Ages.

Conſider ſeriouſly with your ſelves; ought not the great matters wherein we are agreed, our union in the Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion and in all the neceſſary Articles of that *Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, in the ſame Sacraments, and in all the ſubſtantial parts of God's worſhip, and in the great Duties and Vertues of the Chriſtian life, to be of greater force to unite us, than difference in doubtful Opinions, and in little

little Rites and Circumſtances of worſhip to divide and break us?

Are not the things about which we differ in their nature *indifferent*, that is, things about which there ought to be no difference among wiſe men? Are they not at a great diſtance from the life and eſſence of Religion, and rather good or bad as they tend to the Peace and Unity of the Church, or are made uſe of to Schiſm and Faction, than either neceſſary or evil in themſelves? And ſhall little ſcruples weigh ſo far with us, as by breaking the Peace of the Church about them to endanger our whole Religion? Shall we take one another by *the throat for an hundred pence*, when our common Adverſary ſtands ready to clap upon us an Action of *ten thouſand talents*? Can we in good earneſt be contented that rather than the *Surplice* ſhould not be thrown out, *Popery* ſhould come in; and rather than receive the Sacrament in the humble but indifferent poſture of *kneeling*, to ſwallow the Camel of *Tranſubſtantiation*, and *adore* the Elements of Bread and Wine for our God and Saviour? and rather than to ſubmit to a *Set Form* of Prayer, to have the Service of God perform'd in an *unknown Tongue*?

Are

Are we not yet made ſenſible, *at leaſt in this our Day*, by ſo clear a Demonſtration as the Providence of God hath lately given us: and had not He been infinitely merciful to us, might have proved the deareſt and moſt dangerous Experiment that ever was: I ſay, are we not yet convinced, what mighty advantages our Enemies have made of our Diviſions, and what a plentiful harveſt they have had among us, during our Differences, and upon occaſion of them; and how near their Religion was to have entred in upon us at once, at thoſe wide breaches which we had made for it? And will we ſtill take counſel of our Enemies, and chuſe to follow that courſe to which, of all other, they who hate us and ſeek our ruine would moſt certainly adviſe and direct us? Will we freely offer them that advantage which they would be contented to purchaſe at any rate?

Let us after all our ſad experience, at laſt take Warning to keep a ſtedfaſt eye upon our chief Enemy, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be diverted from the conſideration and regard of our greateſt danger by the petty provocations of our Friends; ſo I chuſe to call thoſe who diſſent from us in leſſer matters, becauſe I would

would fain have them ſo, and they ought in all reaſon to be ſo: But however they behave themſelves, we ought not much to mind thoſe who only fling dirt at us, whilſt we are ſure there are others who fly at our throats, and ſtrike at our very hearts.

Let us learn this wiſdom of our Enemies, who though they have many great differences among themſelves, yet they have made a ſhift at this time to unite together to deſtroy us: And ſhall not we do as much to ſave our ſelves?

——— *fas eſt & ab hoſte doceri.*

It was a Principle among the ancient *Romans*, a brave and a wiſe People, *donare inimicitias Reip.* to give up and ſacrifice their private enmities and quarrels to the publick good and the ſafety of the Common-wealth. And is it not to every conſiderate man as clear as the Sun at Noonday, that nothing can maintain and ſupport the Proteſtant Religion amongſt us, and *found* our Church *upon a Rock*, ſo that *when the rain falls, and the winds blow, and the floods beat upon it*, it ſhall *ſtand* firm and unſhaken: That nothing can be a Bulwark of ſufficient force to

reſiſt all the arts and attempts of Popery, but *an eſtabliſht National Religion*, firmly united and compacted in all the parts of it? Is it not plain to every eye, that little *Sects* and *ſeparate Congregations* can never do it? but will be like a Foundation of *ſand* to a weighty Building, which whatever ſhew it may make cannot ſtand long, becauſe it wants Union at the Foundation, and for that reaſon muſt neceſſarily want ſtrength and firmneſs.

It is not for private perſons to undertake in matters of publick concernment; but I think we have no cauſe to doubt, but the Governors of our Church (notwithſtanding all the advantages of Authority, and we think of reaſon too on our ſide) are Perſons of that Piety and Prudence, that for Peace ſake, and in order to a firm Union among Proteſtants, they would be content, if that would do it, not to inſiſt upon little things; but to yield them up, whether to the infirmity, or importunity, or, perhaps in ſome very few things, to the plauſible exceptions of thoſe who differ from us.

But then ſurely on the other ſide, men ought to bring along with them a peaceable diſpoſition, and a mind ready to comply with the Church in which they were born

born and baptized, in all reaſonable and lawful things, and deſirous upon any terms that are tolerable to return to the Communion of it: a mind free from paſſion and prejudice, from peeviſh exceptions, and groundleſs and endleſs ſcruples; not apt to inſiſt upon little cavils and objections, to which the very beſt things, and the greateſt and cleareſt Truths in the world are and always will be liable: And whatever they have been heretofore, to be *henceforth no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the ſleight of men and cunning craftineſs of thoſe who lie in wait to deceive.*

And if we were thus affected on all hands, we might yet be a happy Church and Nation; if we would govern our ſelves by theſe Rules and walk according to them, *peace* would be *upon us, and mercy, and on the* Iſrael *of God.*

Thirdly, I ſhall conclude all with a few words *in relation to the occaſion of this preſent meeting.* I have all this while been recommending to you, from the Authority and Example of our Bleſſed Saviour, and from the nature and reaſon of the thing it ſelf, this moſt excellent Grace and III.

Virtue of Charity, in the moſt proper Acts and Inſtances of it: But beſides particular Acts of Charity to be exerciſed upon emergent occaſions, there are likewiſe charitable Cuſtoms which are highly commendable, becauſe they are more certain and conſtant, of a larger extent, and of a longer continuance: As the *Meeting* of the *Sons* of the *Clergy*, which is now form'd and eſtabliſh'd into a *charitable Corporation*: And the Anniverſary *Meetings* of thoſe of the ſeveral *Counties* of *England*, who reſide, or happen to be in *London*; for *two* of the beſt and nobleſt ends that can be, the maintaining of *Friendſhip*, and the promoting of *Charity*. Theſe, and others of the like kind, I call *charitable cuſtoms*, which of late years have very much obtained in this great and famous City. And it cannot but be a great pleaſure and ſatisfaction to all good men, to ſee ſo generous, ſo humane, ſo Chriſtian a diſpoſition to prevail and reign ſo much amongſt us.

The ſtrange overflowing of vice and wickedneſs in our Land, and the prodigious increaſe and impudence of infidelity and impiety, hath of late years boaded very ill to us, and brought terrible Judgments upon this City and Nation, and

ſeems

ſeems ſtill to threaten us with more and greater: And the greateſt comfort I have had under theſe ſad apprehenſions of Gods diſpleaſure hath been this, that though *bad* men were perhaps never worſe in any Age, yet the *good*, who I hope are not a few, were never more truly and ſubſtantially good: I do verily believe there never were, in any Time, greater and more real effects of Charity; not from a blind ſuperſtition, and an ignorant zeal, and a mercenary and arrogant and preſumptuous principle of Merit, but from a ſound knowledg, and a ſincere love and obedience to God, or, as the *Apoſtle* expreſſes it, *out of a pure heart, and of a good conſcience, and of faith unfeigned.*

And who, that loves God and Religion, can chuſe but take great contentment to ſee ſo general and forward an inclination in People this way? Which hath been very much cheriſhed of late years by this ſort of Meetings: and that to very good purpoſe and effect, in many charitable contributions diſpoſed in the beſt and wiſeſt ways: and which likewiſe hath tended very much to the reconciling of the minds of men, and the allaying of thoſe fierce heats and animoſities which have been cauſed by our Civil

confuſions, and Religious diſtractions. For there is nothing many times wanting to take away prejudice, and to extinguiſh hatred and ill-will, but an opportunity for men to ſee and underſtand one another; by which they will quickly perceive, that they are not ſuch Monſters as they have been repreſented one to another at a diſtance.

We are, I think, one of the laſt Counties of *England* that have entred into this friendly and charitable kind of Society; Let us make amends for our late ſetting out by quickning our pace, that ſo we may overtake and outſtrip thoſe who are gone before us: Let not our Charity partake of the coldneſs of our Climate, but let us endeavour that it may be equal to the extent of our Country; and as we are incomparably the greateſt *County* of *England*, let it appear that we are ſo by the largeneſs and extent of our Charity.

O Lord, who haſt taught us that all our doings without Charity are nothing, ſend thy Holy Ghoſt, and pour into our hearts that moſt excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of Peace, and of all Vertues: Without which whoſoever liveth, is counted

ted dead before thee. Grant this for thy only Son Jesus Christ's sake.

Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A

SERMON

Preached at

WHITE-HALL,

April 4*th*, 1679.

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1 JOHN IV. 1.

Beloved, believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe Prophets are gone out into the World.

THis caution and counſel was given upon occaſion of the falſe Prophets and Teachers that were riſen up in the beginning of the *Chriſtian* Church, who endeavoured to ſeduce men from the true Doctrine of the Goſpel delivered by the Apoſtles of our

our Lord and Saviour. And these teaching contrary things, could not both be from God; and therefore St. *John* calls upon Christians to examine the Doctrines and Pretences of those new Teachers, whether they were from God or not. *Believe not every Spirit*; *that is*, not every one that takes upon him to be inspired and to be a Teacher come from God: *But try the Spirits*; *that is*, examine those that make this pretence, whether it be real or not; and examine the Doctrines which they bring, because there are many Impostors abroad in the World. 1

This is the plain sense of the Words: In which there are contained these *four* Propositions.

First, *That men may, and often do, falsly pretend to Inspiration.* And this is the reason upon which the Apostle grounds this Exhortation: *Because many false Prophets are gone out into the world*, therefore we should try who are true, and who are false.

Secondly, *We are not to believe every one that pretends to be inspired, and to teach a Divine Doctrine.* This follows upon the former; because men may falsly pretend

pretend to Inſpiration, therefore we are not to believe every one that makes this pretence. For any man that hath but confidence enough, and conſcience little enough, may pretend to come from God. And if we admit all pretences of this kind, we lie at the mercy of every crafty and confident man to be led by him into what deluſions he pleaſeth.

Thirdly, *Neither are we to reject all that pretend to come from God.* This is ſufficiently implied in the *Text*; for when the *Apoſtle* ſays *believe not every Spirit*, he ſuppoſeth we are to believe ſome; and when he ſaith *try the Spirits whether they be of God*, he ſuppoſeth ſome to be of God, and that thoſe which are ſo are to be believed. Theſe *three* Obſervations are ſo plain that I need only to name them, to make way for the

Fourth, Which I principally deſigned to inſiſt upon from theſe Words. And that is this, *That there is ſome way to diſcern mere pretenders to Inſpiration, from thoſe who are truly and Divinely inſpired.* And this is neceſſarily implied in the *Apoſtles* bidding us to *try the Spirits whether they are of God.* For it were in vain to make any trial, if there be no way to diſcern between pretended and real Inſpirations.

Now

Now the handling of this will give occaſion to *two* very material Enquiries, and uſeful to be reſolved.

I. *How we may diſcern between true and counterfeit Doctrines*: thoſe which really are from God, and thoſe which only pretend to be ſo?

II. *To whom this judgment of diſcerning doth appertain*?

I. *How we may diſcern between true and counterfeit Doctrines and Revelations*? for the clearing of this I ſhall lay down theſe following Propoſitions.

I. *That Reaſon is the faculty whereby Revelations are to be diſcerned*; or to uſe the phraſe in the *text*, it is that whereby we are to judge what *Spirits are of God, and what not*. For all Revelation from God ſuppoſeth us to be men, and to be indued with Reaſon; and therefore it does not create new Faculties in us, but propounds new Objects to that Faculty which was in us before. Whatever Doctrines God reveals to men are propounded to their Underſtandings, and by this Faculty we are to examine all Doctrines which pretend to be from God, and upon

on examination to judge whether there be reaſon to receive them as Divine, or to reject them as Impoſtures.

2. *All ſupernatural Revelation ſuppoſeth the truth of the Principles of Natural Religion.* We muſt firſt be aſſured that there is a God, before we can know that he hath made any Revelation of himſelf: and we muſt know that his Words are true, otherwiſe there were no ſufficient reaſon to believe the Revelations which he makes to us: and we muſt believe his Authority over us, and that he will reward our obedience to his Laws, and puniſh our breach of them; otherwiſe there would neither be ſufficient obligation nor encouragement to Obedience. Theſe and many other things are ſuppoſed to be true, and naturally known to us, antecedently to all ſupernatural Revelation; otherwiſe the Revelations of God would ſignifie nothing to us, nor be of any force with us.

3. *All Reaſonings about Divine Revelations muſt neceſſarily be governed by the Principles of Natural Religion: that is,* by thoſe apprehenſions which men naturally have of the Divine perfections, and by the clear Notions of good and evil which are imprinted upon our Natures.

tures. Becauſe we have no other way to judg what is worthy of God, and credible to be revealed by him, and what not, but by the natural notions which we have of God and of his eſſential perfections: which, becauſe we know him to be immutable, we have reaſon to believe he will never contradict. And by theſe Principles likewiſe, we are to interpret what God hath revealed; and when any doubt ariſeth concerning the meaning of any divine Revelation (as that of the Holy Scriptures) we are to govern our ſelves in the interpretation of it by what is moſt agreeable to thoſe natural Notions which we have of God, and we have all the reaſon in the World to reject that ſenſe which is contrary thereto. For inſtance, when God is repreſented in Scripture as having a humane ſhape, eyes, ears and hands, the Notions which men naturally have of the Divine Nature and Perfections do ſufficiently direct us to interpret theſe expreſſions in a ſenſe worthy of God, and agreeable to his Perfection: And therefore it is reaſonable to underſtand them as rather ſpoken to our capacity, and in a Figure, than to be literally intended. And this will proportionably hold in many other caſes.

4. *No-*

4. *Nothing ought to be received as a Revelation from God which plainly contradicts the Principles of Natural Religion, or overthrows the certainty of them.* For inſtance, it were in vain to pretend a Revelation from God, *That there is no God*, becauſe this is a contradiction in terms. So likewiſe to pretend a command from God, *That we are to hate and deſpiſe him*; becauſe it is not credible that God ſhould require any thing of Reaſonable Creatures ſo unſuitable to their Natures, and to their Obligations to him; Beſides that ſuch a Law as this does tacitly involve a contradiction; becauſe upon ſuch a ſuppoſition, to deſpiſe God would be to obey him; and yet to obey him is certainly to honour him. So that in this caſe to honour God, and to deſpiſe him, would be the ſame thing, and equal contempts of him. In like manner it would be vain to pretend any Revelation from God, *That there is no life after this, nor rewards and puniſhments in another World*: becauſe this is contrary to thoſe natural apprehenſions which have generally poſſeſt mankind, and would take away the main force and ſanction of the divine Laws. The like may be ſaid concerning any pretended Revelation from God, which

which evidently contradicts those natural Notions which men have of good and evil; as, *That God should command, or allow Sedition and Rebellion, Perfideousness and Perjury*; because the practise of these would be apparently destructive of the peace and happiness of Mankind, and would naturally bring confusion into the World: But *God is not the God of Confusion, but of Order*, which St. *Paul* appeals to as a Principle naturally known. Upon the same account nothing ought to be entertained as a Divine Revelation *which overthrows the certainty of the Principles of natural Religion*; because that would take away the certainty of Divine Revelation it self, which supposeth the truth of those Principles. For instance, whoever pretends any Revelation *that brings the Providence of God into question*, does by that very thing make such a Revelation questionable. For if God take no care of the World, have no concernment for humane affairs, why should we believe that he makes any Revelation of his Will to men? And by this Principle *Moses* will have false Prophets to be tried: *Deut.* 13. 1. *If there arise among you a Prophet, and giveth thee a sign or wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he*

spake

ſpake unto thee, ſaying, Let us go after other Gods, and let us ſerve them; thou ſhalt not hearken unto the words of that Prophet: And he gives the reaſon of this, *ver.* 5. *Beeauſe he hath ſpoken unto you to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the Land of Egypt.* Here is a caſe wherein a falſe Prophet is ſuppoſed to work a true Miracle to give credit to his Doctrine, (which in other caſes the Scripture makes the ſign of a true Prophet) but yet in this caſe he is to be rejected as an Impoſtor: Becauſe the Doctrine he teacheth would draw men off from the worſhip of the true God who is naturally known, and had manifeſted himſelf to the people of *Iſrael* in ſo miraculous a manner, by bringing them out of the Land of *Egypt*. So that a Miracle is not enough to give credit to a Prophet who teacheth any thing contrary to that natural Notion which men have, *That there is but one God, who only ought to be worſhipped.*

5. *Nothing ought to be received as a Divine Doctrine and Revelation, without good evidence that it is ſo: that is,* without ſome Argument ſufficient to ſatisfie a prudent and conſiderate man. Now (ſuppoſing there be nothing in the mat-

ter of the Revelation that is evidently contrary to the Principles of Natural Religion, nor to any former Revelation which hath already received a greater and more ſolemn atteſtation from God) Miracles are owned by all Mankind to be a ſufficient Teſtimony to any Perſon, or Doctrine, that are from God. This was the Teſtimony which God gave to *Moſes* to ſatisfie the people of *Iſrael* that he had ſent him; *Exod.* 4. 1, 2. *Moſes ſaid, They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will ſay, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* Upon this God endues him with a power of Miracles, to be an evidence to them, *That they may believe that the God of their Fathers, Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.* And all along in the *Old Teſtament*, when God ſent his Prophets to make a new Revelation, or upon any ſtrange and extraordinary meſſage, he always gave credit to them by ſome Sign or Wonder which they foretold or wrought. And when he ſent his *Son* into the World, he gave Teſtimony to him by innumerable great and unqueſtionable Miracles, more and greater than *Moſes* and all the Prophets had wrought. And there was great reaſon for this: becauſe

our

our Saviour came not only to publiſh a new Religion to the World, but to put an end to that Religion which God had inſtituted before. And now that the Goſpel hath had the confirmation of ſuch Miracles as never were wrought upon any other occaſion, no Evidence inferiour to this can in reaſon controul this Revelation, or give credit to any thing contrary to it. And therefore though the falſe Prophets and Antichriſts, foretold by our Saviour, did really work Miracles, yet they were ſo inconſiderable in compariſon of our Saviour's, that they deſerve no credit in oppoſition to that Revelation which had ſo clear a Teſtimony given to it from Heaven by Miracles, beſides all other concurring Arguments to confirm it.

6. And *Laſtly, No Argument is ſufficient to prove a Doctrine or Revelation to be from God, which is not clearer and ſtronger than the Difficulties and Objections againſt it:* Becauſe all aſſent is grounded upon Evidence, and the ſtrongeſt and cleareſt evidence always carries it: But where the evidence is equal on both ſides, that can produce nothing but a ſuſpenſe and doubt in the mind whether the thing be true or not. If *Moſes* had not confuted

Pharaoh's Magicians by working Miracles which they could not work, they might reasonably have disputed it with him who had been the true Prophet: But when he did works plainly above the power of their Magick and the Devil to do, then they submitted, and acknowledged that *there was the Finger of God.* So likewise, though a person work a Miracle (which ordinarily is a good evidence that he is sent by God) yet if the Doctrine he brings be plainly contrary to those natural Notions which we have of God, this is a better objection against the truth of this Doctrine than the other is a proof of it; as is plain in the case which *Moses* puts, *Deut.* 13. which I mentioned before.

Upon the same account no man can reasonably believe the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* to be revealed by God; because every man hath as great evidence that Transubstantiation is false, as any man can pretend to have that God hath revealed any such thing. Suppose Transubstantiation to be part of the Christian Doctrine, it must have the same confirmation with the whole, and that is *Miracles*: But of all Doctrines in the world it is peculiarly incapable of being proved by a Miracle. For if a Miracle were wrought

wrought for the proof of it, the very ſame aſſurance which a man hath of the truth of the Miracle, he hath of the falſhood of the Doctrine, *that is*, the clear evidence of his ſenſes for both. For that there is a Miracle wrought to prove, *that what he ſees in the Sacrrment is not bread but the body of Chriſt*, he hath onely the evidence of his ſenſes; and he hath the very ſame evidence to prove, *that what he ſees in the Sacrament is not the body of Chriſt, but bread.* So that here ariſeth a new controverſie, whether a man ſhould believe his ſenſes giving teſtimony againſt the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, or bearing teſtimony to the Miracle which is wrought to confirm that Doctrine: For there is juſt the ſame evidence againſt the truth of the Doctrine, which there is for the truth of the Miracle. So that the Argument for Tranſubſtantiation, and the Objection againſt it, do juſt ballance one another; and where the weights in Both Scales are equal, it is impoſſible that the one ſhould weigh down the other: and conſequently Tranſubſtantiation is not to be proved by a Miracle; for that would be, *to prove to a man by ſomething that he ſees, that he does not ſee what he ſees.*

And thus I have endeavoured, as briefly and clearly as I could, to give ſatisfaction to the *firſt* Enquiry I propounded, *viz.* How we may diſcern between true and counterfeit Revelations and Doctrines: I proceed now to the

II. II. *To whom this judgement of Diſcerning does appertain.* Whether to Chriſtians in general, or to ſome particular Perſon or Perſons, authoriſed by God to judge for the reſt of mankind, by whoſe judgment all men are concluded and bound up. And this is an enquiry of no ſmall Importance; becauſe it is one of the moſt fundamental Points in difference between Us and the Church of *Rome.* And however in many particular Controverſies, as concerning *Tranſubſtantiation, the Communion in one kind, the Service of God in an unknown Tongue*; the buſineſs of *Indulgences*, the *Invocation of Saints*, the *Worſhip of Images*, they are not able to offer any thing that is fit to move a reaſonable and conſiderate man; yet in this Controverſie, concerning the Judge of Controverſies, they are not deſtitute of ſome ſpecious appearance of Reaſon which deſerves to be weighed and conſidered. Therefore that we may examine this matter

matter to the bottom, I ſhall do theſe *three* things.

1. Lay down ſome Cautions and Limitations whereby we may underſtand how far the generality of Chriſtians are allowed to judge in matters of Religion.

2. I ſhall repreſent the grounds of this Principle.

3. Endeavour to ſatisfie the main Objection of our Adverſaries againſt it: And likewiſe to ſhew, that there is no ſuch reaſon and neceſſity for an univerſal infallible Judge as they pretend.

I. I ſhall lay down ſome Cautions and Limitations, by which we may underſtand how far the generality of Chriſtians are allowed to judge in matters of Religion. I.

Firſt, Private Perſons are onely to judge for themſelves, and not to impoſe their Judgement upon others, as if they had any Authority over them. And this is reaſonable, becauſe if it were otherwiſe, a Man would deprive others of that Liberty which he aſſumes to himſelf,

and which he can claim upon no other account, but becauſe it belongs to others equally with himſelf.

Secondly, This liberty of judging is not ſo to be underſtood as to take away the neceſſity and uſe of Guides and Teachers in Religion. Nor can this be denied to be a reaſonable limitation; becauſe the knowledge of Revealed Religion is not a thing born with us, nor ordinarily ſupernaturally infuſed into men; but is to be learned as other things are. And if it be to be learned, there muſt be ſome to teach and inſtruct others: And they that will learn, muſt be modeſt and humble; and in thoſe things, of which they are no competent Judges, they muſt give credit to their Teachers, and truſt their skill: For inſtance, every unlearned man is to take it upon the credit of thoſe who are skilful, that the Scriptures are truly and faithfully tranſlated; and for the underſtanding of obſcure Texts of Scripture, and more difficult points in Religion, he is to rely upon thoſe, whoſe proper buſineſs and employment it is to apply themſelves to the underſtanding of theſe things. For in theſe caſes every man is not capable of judging himſelf, and therefore he muſt neceſſarily truſt o-

thers;

thers: And in all other things he ought to be modeſt; and unleſs it be in plain matters, which every man can judg of, he ought rather to diſtruſt himſelf than his Teacher.

And this reſpect may be given to a Teacher without either ſuppoſing him to be infallible, or making an abſolute reſignation of my judgment to him. A man may be a very able Teacher (ſuppoſe of the Mathematicks) and fit to have the reſpect which is due to a Teacher, tho he be not infallible in thoſe Sciences: and becauſe Infallibility is not neceſſary to ſuch a Teacher, it is neither neceſſary nor convenient that I ſhould abſolutely reſign up my Judgment to him. For though I have reaſon to credit him, within the compaſs of his Art, in things which I do not know, I am not therefore bound to believe him in things plainly contrary to what I and all mankind do certainly know. For example, if upon pretence of his skill in Arithmetick, which I am learning of him, he ſhould tell me, *That twice two do not make four, but five*; though I believed him to be the beſt Mathematician in the World, yet I cannot believe him in this thing: Nor is there reaſon I ſhould; becauſe I did not come

come to learn this of him, but knew as much of that before as he or any man elſe could tell me. The caſe is the ſame in matters of Religion; in which there are ſome things ſo plain, and lie ſo level to all capacities, that every man is almoſt equally judge of them: As I ſhall have occaſion farther to ſhew by and by.

Thirdly, Neither does this liberty of judging, exempt men from a due ſubmiſſion and obedience to their Teachers and Governors. Every man is bound to obey the lawful Commands of his Governors; and what by publick conſent and Authority is determined and eſtabliſhed, ought not to be gainſaid by private Perſons, but upon very clear evidence of the falſhood or unlawfulneſs of it. And this is every mans duty, for the maintaining of Order, and out of regard to the Peace and Unity of the Church; which is not to be violated upon every ſcruple and frivolous pretence: And when men are perverſe and diſobedient, Authority is Judg, and may reſtrain and puniſh them.

Fourthly, Nor do I ſo far extend this Liberty of judging in Religion, as to think every man fit to diſpute the Controverſies of Religion. A great part of peo-

people are ignorant, and of ſo mean capacity as not to be able to judge of the force of a very good Argument, much leſs of the iſſue of a long Diſpute; and ſuch Perſons ought not to engage in diſputes of Religion; but to beg God's direction, and to rely upon their Teachers; and above all to live up to the plain dictates of natural Light, and the clear Commands of God's Word, and this will be their beſt ſecurity. And if the Providence of God have placed them under ſuch Guides as do ſeduce them into Error, their Ignorance is invincible, and God will not condemn them for it, ſo long as they ſincerely endeavour to do the will of God ſo far as they know it. And this being the caſe of many, eſpecially in the Church of *Rome*, where Ignorance is ſo induſtriouſly cheriſhed, I have ſo much charity as to hope well concerning many of them: And ſeeing *that* Church teacheth and enjoins the people to worſhip Images, it is in ſome ſenſe charitably done of them not to let them know the Second Commandment, that they may not be guilty of ſinning againſt ſo plain a Law. Having premiſed theſe Cautions, I proceed in the

II. Place,

II. II. Place, To repreſent to you *the grounds of this Principle of our Religion*, viz. *That we allow private perſons to judge for themſelves in matters of Religion.*

Firſt, Becauſe many things in Religion, eſpecially thoſe which are moſt neceſſary to be believed and practiſed, are ſo plain, that every man of ordinary capacity, after competent inſtruction in matters of Religion (which is always to be ſuppoſed) can as well judg of them for himſelf, as any man, or company of men in the world can judge for him. Becauſe in theſe he hath a plain Rule to go by, *Natural Light* and clear *Revelation of Scripture.* And this is no new Prineiple of the *Proteſtants*, but moſt expreſly owned by the Ancient *Fathers: Whatever things are neceſſary, are plain*, ſaith St. *Chryſoſtom. All things are plainly contained in Scripture which concern faith and a good life*, ſaith Saint *Auſtin.* And nothing can be more reaſonable, than that thoſe things which are plain to every man ſhould be left to every man's judgment. For every man can judg of what is plain; of evident Truth and Falſhood, Virtue and Vice, of Doctrines and Laws plainly delivered in Scrip-

Scripture, if we believe any thing to be ſo, which is next to madneſs to deny. I will refer it to no mans Judgment upon earth to determine for me, *Whether there be a God or not? Whether Murder and Perjury be Sins*? Whether it be not plain in Scripture, That *Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*, That *he became man*, and *died for us*, and *roſe again*? So that there is no need of a Judg in theſe caſes. Nor can I poſſibly believe any man to be ſo abſolutely infallible, as not to call his infallibility into queſtion, if he determines any thing contrary to what is plain and evident to all mankind. For if he ſhould determine *that there is no God*, or *that he is not to be worſhipped*, or *that he will not puniſh and reward men*, or, which is the caſe that *Bellarmine* puts, *that Virtue is Vice, and Vice Vertue*; he would hereby take away the very foundation of Religion; and how can I look upon him any longer as a Judg in Matters of Religion, when there can be no ſuch thing as Religion if he have judged and determined right?

Secondly, The Scripture plainly allows this liberty to *particular* and *private* Perſons to judg for themſelves. And for this I need go no farther than my *Text*, which bids

bids men *try the Spirits whether they be of God.* I do not think this is ſpoken only to the Pope or a general Council, but to Chriſtians in general: for to theſe the *Apoſtle* writes. Now if St. *John* had believed that God had conſtituted an infallible Judge in his Church, to whoſe Sentence and Determination all Chriſtians are bound to ſubmit, he ought in all reaſon to have referred Chriſtians to him for the trial of Spirits, and not have left it to every man's private judgment to examine and to determine theſe things. But it ſeems St. *Paul* was likewiſe of the ſame mind; and though he was guided by an infallible Spirit, yet he did not expect that men ſhould blindly ſubmit to his Doctrine: Nay, ſo far is he from that, that he commends the *Bereans* for that very thing for which I dare ſay the Church of *Rome* would have check'd them moſt ſeverely, namely, for *ſearching the Scriptures* to ſee *whether thoſe things* which the Apoſtles delivered *were ſo* or not: This liberty St. *Paul* allowed; and though he was inſpired by God, yet he treated thoſe whom he taught like men. And indeed, it were a hard caſe that a neceſſity of believing Divine Revelations, and rejecting Impoſtures, ſhould be impoſed upon

upon Chriſtians; and yet the liberty of judging, whether a Doctrine be from God or not, ſhould be taken away from them.

Thirdly, Our Adverſaries themſelves are forced to grant that which in effect is as much as we contend for. For though they deny a liberty of judging in *particular points* of *Religion*, yet they are forced to grant men a liberty of judging upon the *whole*. When they of the Church of *Rome* would perſwade a *Jew*, or a *Heathen*, to become a Chriſtian; or a *Heretick* (as they are pleaſed to call *us*) to come over to the Communion of their Church, and offer Arguments to induce them thereto; they do by this very thing, whether they will or no, make that man Judge *which is the true Church*, and *the true Religion*. Becauſe it would be ridiculous to perſwade a man to turn to their Religion, and to urge him with Reaſons to do ſo, and yet to deny him the uſe of his own judgment whether their Reaſons be ſufficient to move him to make ſuch a change. Now, as the *Apoſtle* reaſons in another caſe, If men be fit to judge for themſelves in ſo great and important a matter as the choice of their Religion, why ſhould they be thought

unwor-

unworthy to judge in leſſer matters? They tell us indeed that a man may uſe his judgment in the choice of his Religion; but when he hath once choſen, he is then for ever to reſign up his judgment to their Church: But what tolerable reaſon can any man give, why a man ſhould be fit to judge upon the *whole*, and yet unfit to judge upon *particular* Points? eſpecially if it be conſidered, that no man can make a diſcreet judgment of any Religion, before he hath examined the particular Doctrines of it, and made a judgment concerning *them*. Is it credible, that God ſhould give a man judgment in the moſt fundamental and important matter of all, viz. *To diſcern the true Religion*, and *the true Church, from the falſe*; for no other end, but to enable him to chuſe once for all to whom he ſhould reſign and inſlave his judgment for ever? which is juſt as reaſonable as if one ſhould ſay, That God hath given a man eyes for no other end, but to look out once for all, and to pitch upon a diſcreet perſon to lead him about blindfold all the days of his life. I come now to the

III. III. Thing I propounded, which is, *To Anſwer the main Objection of our Adverſaries*

ſaries againſt this Principle; and likewiſe to ſhew that there is no ſuch Reaſon and neceſſity for an univerſal Infallible Judge, as they pretend. Now their great Objection is this, If every man may judge for himſelf, there will be nothing but confuſion in Religion, there will be no end of Controverſies: ſo that an univerſal infallible Judge is neceſſary, and without this God had not made ſufficient proviſion for the aſſurance of men's Faith, and for the Peace and unity of his Church: Or, as it is expreſſed in the *Canon Law, aliter Dominus non videretur fuiſſe diſcretus, otherwiſe our Lord had not ſeem'd to be diſcreet.* How plauſible ſoever this Objection may appear, I do not deſpair but if men will lay aſide prejudice, and impartially conſider things, to make it abundantly evident, that this ground is not ſufficient to found an Infallible Judge upon. And therefore in anſwer to it, I deſire theſe following particulars may be conſidered.

Firſt, That this which they ſay, rather proves what God ſhould have done according to their fancy, than what he hath really and actually done. My *Text* expreſly bids Chriſtians to *try the Spirits*; which to any man's ſenſe does imply

that they may judge of theſe matters: But the Church of *Rome* ſays they may not; becauſe if this liberty were permitted, God had not ordered things wiſely, and for the beſt, for the peace and unity of his Church. But, as the *Apoſtle* ſays in another caſe, *What art thou, O man, that objecteſt againſt God?*

Secondly, If this reaſoning be good, we may as well conclude that there is an univerſal infallible Judge ſet over the whole world in all *Temporal* matters, to whoſe Authority all mankind is bound to ſubmit. Becauſe this is as neceſſary to the peace of the World, as the other is to the peace of the Church. And men ſurely are every whit as apt to be obſtinate and perverſe about matters of Temporal Right, as about matters of Faith. But it is evident in fact and experience that there is no ſuch univerſal Judge, appointed by God over the whole World, to decide all Caſes of temporal Right; and for want of him the World is fain to ſhift as well as it can. But now a very acute and ſcholaſtical man that would argue that God muſt needs have done whatever he fancies convenient for the World ſhould be done, might by the very ſame way of Reaſoning conclude the neceſ-

neceſſity of an univerſal infallible Judge in Civil matters, as well as in matters of Religion: And their *aliter Dominus non videretur fuiſſe diſcretus, otherwiſe God had not ſeem'd to be diſcreet*, is every whit as cogent and as civil, in the one Caſe as the other.

Thirdly, There is no need of ſuch a Judg, to aſſure men in matters of Religion; Becauſe men be ſufficiently certain without him. I hope it may be certain and clear enough *That there is a God*; and *That his Providence governs the World*; and *That there is another Life after this*, though neither Pope nor Council had ever declared any thing about theſe matters. And for Revealed Doctrines, we may be certain enough of all that is neceſſary, if it be true which the *Fathers* tell us, *That all things neceſſary are plainly revealed in the Holy Scriptures.*

Fourthly, An infallible Judge, if there were one, is no certain way to end Controverſies, and to preſerve the unity of the Church; unleſs it were likewiſe infallibly certain, *That there is ſuch a Judge*, and, *Who he is.* For till men were ſure of both theſe, there would ſtill be a Controverſy, whether there be an infallible Judge, and who he is. And if it be true which they tell us, *That*

without an infallible Judge Controverſies cannot be ended, then a Controverſie concerning an infallible Judge can never be ended. And there are *two* Controverſies actually on foot about an infallible Judg; One, *Whether there be an infallible Judge or not*? which is a Controverſie between Us and the Church of *Rome*: and the other, *Who this infallible Judge is*? which is a Controverſie among themſelves, which could never yet be decided: And yet till it be decided, Infallibility, if they had it, would be of no uſe to them for the ending of Controverſies.

Fifthly, There is no ſuch abſolute need, as is pretended, of determining all Controverſies in Religion. If men would deveſt themſelves of prejudice and intereſt, as they ought, in matters of Religion, the neceſſary things of Religion are plain enough, and men would generally agree well enough about them: But if men will ſuffer themſelves to be byaſſed by theſe, they would not hearken to an infallible Judge, if there were one; or they would find out ſome way or other to call his Infallibility into queſtion. And as for doubtful and leſſer matters in Religion, charity and mutual forbearance among Chriſtians would make the Church as peaceable

and

and happy, as perhaps it was ever deſign'd to be in this World, without abſolute unity in Opinion.

Sixthly and *Laſtly*, Whatever may be the inconveniences of mens judging for themſelves in Religion, yet taking this Principle with the Cautions I have given, I doubt not to make it appear, that the inconveniences are far the leaſt on that ſide. The preſent condition of humane Nature doth not admit of any conſtitution of things, whether in Religion or Civil matters, which is free from all kind of exception and inconvenience: That is the beſt ſtate of things which is liable to the leaſt and feweſt. If men be modeſt, and humble, and willing to learn, God hath done that which is ſufficient for the aſſurance of our Faith, and for the peace of his Church, without an infallible Judge: And if men will not be ſo, I cannot tell what would be ſufficient. I am ſure there were Hereſies and Schiſms in the *Apoſtles* Times, when Thoſe who governed the Church were certainly guided by an infallible Spirit. God hath appointed Guides and Teachers for us in matters of Religion, and if we will be contented to be inſtructed by them in thoſe neceſſary Articles and Duties of Religion, which are

plainly contained in Scripture; and to be counſelled and directed by them in things that are more doubtful and difficult, I do not ſee why we might not do well enough without any infallible Judge or Guide.

But ſtill it will be ſaid, Who ſhall judge what things are plain and what doubtful? The anſwer to this, in my opinion, is not difficult. For if there be any thing plain in Religion, every man that hath been duly inſtructed in the Principles of Religion can judge of it, or elſe it is not plain. But there are ſome things in Religion ſo very plain, that no Guide or Judge can in reaſon claim that Authority over men, as to oblige them to believe or do the contrary; no, though he pretend to Infallibility; no, though he were an *Apoſtle*, though he were an *Angel from heaven*. S. *Paul* puts the caſe ſo high, *Gal.* 1. 8. *Though we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Goſpel unto you than what you have received, let him be accurſed:* which plainly ſuppoſeth that Chriſtians may and can judge when Doctrines are contrary to the Goſpel. What? not believe an *Apoſtle*, nor *an Angel from heaven*, if he ſhould teach any thing evidently contrary to the plain Doctrine of the Goſpel? If he ſhould determine

termine Vertue to be Vice, and Vice to be Vertue? No; not an Apoſtle, nor an Angel; becauſe ſuch a Doctrine as this would confound and overturn all things in Religion. And yet *Bellarmin* puts this very Caſe, and ſays, If the Pope ſhould ſo determine, *we were bound to believe him, unleſs we would ſin againſt Conſcience.*

I will conclude this Diſcourſe by putting a very plain and familiar Caſe; by which it will appear what credit and authority is fit to be given to a Guide, and what not. Suppoſe I came a Stranger into *England*, and landing at *Dover* took a Guide there to conduct me in my way to *York*, which I knew before by the *Mapp* to lie *North* of *Dover*: having committed my ſelf to him, if he lead me for two or three days together out of any plain Road, and many times over hedge and ditch, I cannot but think it ſtrange, that in a civil and well inhabited Country there ſhould be no Highways from one part of it to another: Yet thus far I ſubmit to him, though not without ſome regret and impatience. But then if after this, for two or three days more he lead me directly *South*, and with my face full upon the Sun at noon-day, and at laſt bring me back again to *Dover*

Pere; and ſtill bids me follow him; Then certainly no modeſty do's oblige a man not to diſpute with his Guide, and to tell him ſurely that can be no way becauſe it is *Sea*. Now though he ſet never ſo bold a face upon the matter, and tell me with all the gravity and authority in the world, That it is not *the Sea* but *dry Land* under the *ſpecies* and *appearance of Water*; and that whatever my eyes tell me, having once committed my ſelf to his guidance, I muſt not truſt my own ſenſes in the caſe; it being one of the moſt dangerons ſorts of Infidelity for a man to believe his own eyes rather than his *faithful* and *infallible Guide*: All this moves me not; But I begin to expoſtulate roundly with him, and to let him underſtand that if I muſt not believe what I ſee, he is like to be of no farther uſe to me; becauſe I ſhall not be able, at this rate, to know whether I have a Guide, and whether I follow him or not. In ſhort, I tell him plainly, that when I took him for my Guide, I did not take him to tell me the difference between *North* and *South*, between a *Hedge* and a *High-way*, between *Sea* and *dry Land*; all this I knew before, as well as he or any man elſe could tell me; but I took

took him to conduct and direct me the neareſt way to *York*: And therefore after all his impertinent talk; after all his Motives of Credibility to perſwade me to believe him, and all his confident *ſayings*, which he gravely calls *Demonſtrations*, I ſtand ſtifly upon the ſhore, and leave my learned and reverend Guide to take his own courſe, and to diſpoſe of himſelf as he pleaſeth; but firmly reſolved not to follow him. And is any man to be blamed that breaks with his Guide upon theſe Terms?

And this is truly the Caſe, when a man commits himſelf to the Guidance of any Perſon or Church: If by virtue of this Authority, they will needs perſwade me out of my ſenſes, and not to believe *what I ſee*, but *what they ſay*; *that Vertue is Vice, and Vice Vertue*, if they declare them to be ſo: And that becauſe they ſay they are Infallible, I am to receive all their Dictates for Oracles, tho never ſo evidently falſe and abſurd in the Judgment of all Mankind: In this caſe there is no way to be rid of theſe unreaſonable People, but to deſire of them, ſince one kindneſs deſerves another, and all Contradictions are alike eaſie to be believed, that *they* would be pleaſed to believe that Infidelity is Faith,

Faith, and that when I abſolutely renounce their Authority, I do yield a moſt perfect ſubmiſſion and obedience to it.

Upon the whole matter, all the Revelations of God, as well as the Laws of men, go upon this preſumption, that men are not ſtark fools; but that they will conſider their Intereſt and have ſome regard to the great concernment of their eternal ſalvation. And this is as much to ſecure men from miſtake in matters of Belief, as God hath afforded to keep men from ſin in matters of Practice. He hath made no effectual and infallible proviſion that men ſhall not ſin; and yet it would puzzle any man to give a good Reaſon, why God ſhould take more care to ſecure men againſt Errors in belief, than againſt ſin and wickedneſs in their Lives.

I ſhall now only draw *three* or *four* Inferences from this Diſcourſe which I have made, and ſo conclude.

1. *That it is every mans Duty who hath ability and capacity for it, to endeavour to underſtand the grounds of his Religion.* For to try Doctrines is to inquire into the grounds and reaſons of them; which the better any man underſtands, the more firmly he will be eſtabliſhed in the Truth, and be the more reſolute in the day of Trial,

Trial, and the better able to withſtand the Arts and aſſaults of cunning Adverſaries, and the fierce ſtorms of Perſecution. And on the contrary, that man will ſoon be moved from his ſtedfaſtneſs who never examined the Grounds and Reaſons of his belief. When it comes to the Trial, he that hath but little to ſay for his Religion will probably neither do nor ſuffer much for it.

2. *That all Doctrines are vehemently to be ſuſpected which decline Trial,* and are ſo loath to be brought into the light; which will not endure a fair Examination, but magiſterially require an implicite Faith: Whereas Truth is bold and full of courage, and loves to appear openly; and is ſo ſecure & confident of her own ſtrength as to offer her ſelf to the ſevereſt Trial and Examination. But to deny all liberty of Enquiry and Judgment in matters of Religion is the greateſt injury and diſparagement to Truth that can be, and a tacite acknowledgment that ſhe lies under ſome diſadvantage, and that there is leſs to be ſaid for her than for Error.

I have often wonder'd why the People in the Church of *Rome* do not ſuſpect their Teachers and Guides to have ſome ill deſign upon them, when they do ſo induſtriouſly

ouſly debar them of the means of Knowledge, and are ſo very loath to let them underſtand what it is that we have to ſay againſt their Religion. For can any thing in the world be more ſuſpicious than to perſwade men, to put out their eyes, upon promiſe that they will help them to a much better and more faithful Guide? If any Church, any profeſſion of men, be unwilling their Doctrines ſhould be expoſed to Trial, it is a certain ſign they know ſomething by them that is faulty, and which will not endure the light. This is the account which our Saviour gives us in a like caſe, It was *becauſe mens deeds were evil* that *they loved darkneſs rather than light*. For *every one that doth evil hateth the light; neither cometh he to the light leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved: But he that doth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt that they are wrought in God.*

3. Since Reaſon and Chriſtianity allow this liberty to private perſons to judg for themſelves in matters of Religion, we ſhould uſe this privilege with much modeſty and humility, with great ſubmiſſion and deference to our Spiritual Rulers and Guides, whom God hath appointed in his Church. And there is very great need of this

this Caution, ſince by experience we find this liberty ſomuch abuſed by many to the nouriſhing of Pride and Self-conceit, of Diviſion and faction; and thoſe who are leaſt able to judge, to be frequently the moſt forward and confident, the moſt peremptory and perverſe: and inſtead of demeaning themſelves with the ſubmiſſion of Learners, to aſſume to themſelves the authority of Judges, even in the moſt doubtful and diſputable matters.

The Tyranny of the *Roman* Church over the Minds and Conſciences of men is not to be juſtified upon any account; but nothing puts ſo plauſible a colour upon it, as the ill uſe that is too frequently made of this natural Privilege of mens judging for themſelves in a matter of ſo infinite concernment, as that of their eternal happineſs. But then it is to be conſider'd, that the proper remedy in this Caſe, is not to deprive men of this Privilege, but to uſe the beſt means to prevent the abuſe of it. For though the *inconveniences* ariſing from the ill uſe of it may be very great, yet the *miſchief* on the other hand is intolerable. Religion it ſelf is liable to be abuſed to very bad purpoſes, and frequently is ſo; but it is not therefore beſt that there ſhould be no Religion: And yet this Objection, if it be of any

any force and be purſued home, is every whit as ſtrong againſt Religion it ſelf, as againſt mens liberty of juding in matters of Religion. Nay I add farther, that no man can judiciouſly embrace the true Religion, unleſs he be permitted to judge, whether that which he embraces be the true Religion or not.

4. When upon due Trial and Examination we are well ſetled and eſtabliſh'd in our Religion, *let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our Faith without wavering*; and not be *like Children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, through the ſleight of men, and the cunning craftineſs of thoſe who lye in wait to deceive.* And above all, let us reſolve to live according to the excellent Rules and Precepts of our holy Religion; let us heartily obey that Doctrine which we profeſs to believe. We, who enjoy the *Proteſtant* Religion, have all the means and advantages of underſtanding the Will of God, free liberty and full ſcope of enquiring into it, and informing our ſelves concerning it: We have all the opportunities we can wiſh of coming to the knowledge of our Duty: The Oracles of God lie open to us, and his Law is continually before our eyes; *his word is nigh unto us, in our mouths, and in our hearts*; (that is,

is, we may read it and meditate upon it) *that we may do it: The Key of Knowledg is* put into our hands, ſo that if we do not *enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, it is we our ſelves that ſhut our ſelves out. And where there is nothing to hinder us from the knowledge of our Duty, there certainly nothing can excuſe us from the practice of it. For the End of all knowledg is to direct men in their duty, and effectually to engage them to the performance of it: The great buſineſs of Religion is, *to make men truly good, and to teach them to live well.* And if Religion have not this effect, it matters not of what Church any man liſts and enters himſelf; for moſt certainly, *A bad man can be ſaved in none.* Tho a man know the right way to Heaven never ſo well, and be entred into it, yet if he will not walk therein, he ſhall never come thither: Nay, it will be an aggravation of this man's unhappineſs, that he was loſt in the way to Heaven, and periſhed in the very road to Salvation. But if we will in good earneſt apply our ſelves to the practice of Religion, and the obedience of God's Holy Laws, his Grace will never be wanting to us to ſo good a purpoſe.

I have not time to recommend Religion to you at large, with all its advantages.

I will

I will compriſe what I have to ſay in a few words, and mind them at your peril. Let that which is our great concernment be our great care, *To know the Truth and to do it, To fear God and keep his Commandments.* Conſidering the Reaſonableneſs and the Reward of Piety and Virtue, nothing can be wiſer; and conſidering the mighty aſſiſtance of God's Grace, which he is ready to afford to us, and the unſpeakable ſatisfaction and delight which is to be had in the doing of our duty, nothing can be eaſier: Nothing will give us that pleaſure, while we live; nothing can miniſter that true and ſolid comfort to us, when we come to die: There is probably no ſuch way for a man to be happy in this World; to be ſure, there is no way but this to eſcape the intolerable and endleſs miſeries of another World.

Now God grant that we may all know and do in this our day, the things that belong to our peace, for his Mercies ſake in Jeſus Chriſt; To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt be all Honour and Glory now and for ever. Amen.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

At the Assizes held at *KINGSTON* upon *THAMES*, *July* 21. 1681.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

At the Assizes held at

KINGSTON upon

THAMES, July 21.

1681.

TO THE

Right Worſhipful and my honoured Friend

JOSEPH REEVE, Eſq;

High Sheriff of the County of

SURREY.

SIR,

WHen I had perform'd the Service which you were pleaſed to call me to in the preaching of this Sermon, I had no thoughts of making it more publick; And yet in this alſo I was the more eaſily induced to comply with your deſire, becauſe of the ſuitableneſs of the Argument to the Age in which we live; wherein as men have run into the wildeſt extremities in other things, ſo particularly in the matter of Oaths; ſome making conſcience

of taking any Oaths at all, and too many none at all of breaking them.

To convince the great miſtake of the one extreme, and to check the growing evil and miſchief of the other, is the chief deſign of this Diſcourſe. To which I ſhall be very glad if by God's bleſſing it may prove any-wiſe ſerviceable. I am

Sir,

Your very faithful and

humble Servant,

Jo. Tillotſon.

The

The Lawfulneſs, AND Obligation of OATHS.

A

SERMON

Preached at the

Aſſiſes held at *Kingſton* upon *Thames*,

July 21. 1681.

HEB. VI. 16.

And an Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife.

THE Neceſſity of Religion to the ſupport of humane Society in nothing appears more evidently than inthis,

That the obligation of an Oath, which is ſo neceſſary for the maintenance of peace and juſtice among men, depends wholly upon the ſence and belief of a Deity. For no reaſon can be imagined why any man that doth not believe a God, ſhould make the leaſt conſcience of an oath; which is nothing elſe but a ſolemn appeal to God as a witneſs of the truth of what we ſay. So that whoever promotes Atheiſm and Infidelity doth the moſt deſtructive thing imaginable to humane Society, becauſe he takes away the reverence and obligation of Oaths: And whenever that is generally caſt off, human Society muſt disband, and all things run into diſorder. The juſt ſenſe whereof made *David* cry out to God with ſo much earneſtneſs, as if the world had been cracking, and the frame of it ready to break in pieces, *Pſal.* 12. *Help, Lord, for the righteous man ceaſeth, and the faithful fail from among the children of men*: Intimating, That when Faith fails from among men, nothing but a particular and immediate interpoſition of the Divine Providence can preſerve the world from falling into confuſion. And our Bleſſed Saviour gives this as a ſign of the end of the world, and the approaching diſſoluti-

tion

tion of all things, when faith and truth ſhall hardly be found among men, *Luke* 18. 8. *When the Son of man comes, ſhall he find Faith on the earth?* This ſtate of things doth loudly call for his coming to deſtroy the world, which is even ready to diſſolve and fall in pieces of it ſelf when theſe bands and pillars of humane Society do break and fail. And ſurely never in any age was this ſign of the coming of the Son of man more glaring and terrible than in this degenerate Age wherein we live, when almoſt all ſorts of men ſeem to have broke looſe from all obligations to faith and truth.

And therefore I do not know any Argument more proper and uſeful to be treated of upon this Occaſion than of the Nature and Obligation of an *Oath*, which is the utmoſt ſecurity that one man can give to another of the truth of what he ſays; the ſtrongeſt tye of fidelity, the ſureſt ground of judicial proceedings, and the moſt firm and ſacred bond that can be laid upon all that are concerned in the adminiſtration of publick Juſtice; upon *Judge*, and *Jury*, and *Witneſſes*.

And for this reaſon I have pitched upon theſe words; In which the Apoſtle declares to us the great uſe and neceſſity

of Oaths among men; *an Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife.* He had ſaid before, that for our greater aſſurance and comfort God hath confirmed his promiſes to us by an Oath; condeſcending herein to deal with us after the manner of men, who when they would give credit to a doubtful matter confirm what they ſay by an Oath. And generally when any doubt or controverſie ariſeth between Parties conerning a matter of fact, one ſide affirming and the other denying, an end is put to this conteſt by an Oath; *An Oath for confirmation being to them an end of all ſtrife*: *An Oath for confirmation*, εἰς βεβαίωσιν, for the greater aſſurance and eſtabliſhment of a thing: Not that an Oath is always a certain and infallible deciſion of things according to truth and right, but that this is the utmoſt credit that we can give to any thing, and the laſt reſort of truth and confidence among men: After this we can go no farther, for if the Religion of an Oath will not oblige men to ſpeak truth nothing will. This is the utmoſt ſecurity that men can give, and muſt therefore be the final deciſion of all conteſts; *An Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife.*

Now

Now from this aſſertion of the Apoſtle concerning the great uſe and end of Oaths among men, I ſhall take occaſion,

1. To conſider the *nature* of an Oath, and the *kinds* of it.

2. To ſhew the great *uſe* and even *neceſſity* of Oaths, in many caſes.

3. To vindicate the *lawfulneſs* of them where they are neceſſary.

4. To ſhew the ſacred *obligation* of an Oath. I ſhall be as brief in theſe as the juſt handling of them will bear.

I. For the *nature* of an Oath, and the *kinds* of it. An O*ath is an invocation of God, or an appeal to him as a witneſs of the truth of what we ſay.* So that an Oath is a ſacred thing, as being an act of Religion and an invocation of the Name of God: And this, whether the Name of God be expreſly mentioned in it or not. If a man only ſay, *I ſwear*, or I *take my Oath*, that a thing is, or is not, ſo, or ſo; or that I will, or will not, do ſuch a thing: Or if a man *anſwer upon his oath*, being adjured and required ſo to do: Or if a man *ſwear by Heaven, or by Earth*, or by any other thing that hath I.

hath relation to God; in all theſe caſes a man doth virtually call God to witneſs; and in ſo doing he doth by conſequence invoke him as a Judge and an Avenger, in caſe what he ſwears be not true: And if this be expreſt, the Oath is a formal Imprecation; but whether it be, or not, a curſe upon our ſelves is always implied in caſe of perjury.

There are *two* ſorts of Oaths, *Aſſertory*, and *Promiſſory*. An *aſſertory* Oath is when a man affirms or denies upon oath a matter of fact, paſt, or preſent: when he ſwears that a thing was, or is ſo, or not ſo. A *promiſſory* Oath is a promiſe confirmed by an oath, which always reſpects ſomething that is future: And if the promiſe be made directly and immediatley to *God*, then it is called a *Vow*; if to *men*, an *Oath*. I proceed to the

II. II. Thing, which is to ſhew the great *uſe* and even *neceſſity* of Oaths, in many caſes: which is ſo great, that humane Society can very hardly, if at all, ſubſiſt long without them. Government would many times be very inſecure, and for the faithful diſcharge of Offices of great truſt, in which the wellfare of the publick is nearly concerned, it is not poſſible

to

to find any ſecurity equal to that of an Oath; becauſe the obligation of that reacheth to the moſt ſecret and hidden practices of men, and takes hold of them in many caſes where the penalty of no humane Law can have any awe or force upon them: And eſpecially, it is (as the *Civil Law* expreſſeth it) *maximum expediendarum litium remedium*, the beſt means of ending controverſies. And where mens eſtates or lives are concerned, no evidence but what is aſſured by an Oath will be thought ſufficient to decide the matter, ſo as to give full and general ſatisfaction to mankind. For in matters of ſo great concernment, when men have all the aſſurance that can be had, and not till then, they are contented to ſit down and reſt ſatisfied with it. And among all nations an Oath hath always been thought the only peremptory and ſatisfactory way of deciding ſuch controverſies.

III. The *third* thing I propoſed was to vindicate the *lawfulneſs* of Oaths, where they are neceſſary. And it is a very ſtrong inducement to believe the lawfulneſs of them, that the unavoidable condition of humane affairs hath made them ſo III.

ſo neceſſary. The Apoſtle takes it for granted that an Oath is not only of great uſe in humane affairs, but in many caſes of great neceſſity, to confirm a doubtful thing, and to put an end to controverſies which cannot otherwiſe be decided to the ſatisfaction of the Parties contending; *An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife.* And indeed it is hardly imaginable that God ſhould not have left that lawful, which is ſo evidently neceſſary to the peace and ſecurity of mankind.

But becauſe there is a *Sect*, ſprung up in our memory, which hath called in queſtion the lawfulneſs of all Oaths, to the great miſchief and diſturbance of humane Society, I ſhall endeavour to ſearch this matter to the bottom, and to manifeſt how unreaſonable and groundleſs this Opinion is. And to this end, I ſhall

Firſt, Prove the lawfulneſs of Oaths from the authority of this Text, and from the reaſons plainly contained, or ſtrongly implied in it.

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew the weakneſs and inſufficiency of the grounds of the contrary Opinion; whether from Reaſon, or from Scripture, which laſt they principally rely upon; and if it could be made

made out from thence would determine the caſe.

1. I ſhall prove the lawfulneſs of Oaths from the authority of this Text, and the reaſons plainly contained, or ſtrongly implied in it. Becauſe the Apoſtle doth not only ſpeak of the uſe of Oaths among men without any manner of cenſure and reproof, but as a commendable cuſtom and practice, and in many caſes neceſſary for the confirmation of doubtful matters, and in order to the final deciſion of Controverſies and Differences among men. For

Firſt, He ſpeaks of it as the general practice of mankind, to confirm things by an oath in order to the ending of differences. And indeed there is nothing that hath more univerſally obtained in all Ages and Nations of the world; than which there is not a more certain indication that a thing is agreeable to the Law of Nature and the beſt Reaſon of Mankind. And that this was no degenerate practice of Mankind, like that of Idolatry, is from hence evident; that when God ſeparated a people to himſelf, it was practiſed among them, by the holy Patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; and was afterwards not only allowed,

but

but in many Caſes commanded by the Law of *Moſes*; which had it been a thing evil in it ſelf and forbidden by the Law of Nature, would not have been done.

Secondly, Another undeniable Argument from the Text of the lawfulneſs of Oaths is, that God himſelf, in condeſcention to the Cuſtome of men who uſe to confirm and give credit to what they ſay by an Oath, is repreſented by the Apoſtle as confirming his promiſe to us by an Oath, verſe 13. *When God made the promiſe to Abraham, becauſe he could ſwear by none greater, he ſwears by himſelf. For men verily ſwear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath*: which he certainly would not have done, had an oath been unlawful in it ſelf. For that had been to comply with men in an evil practice, and by his own example to give countenance to it in the higheſt manner: But though God condeſcend to repreſent himſelf to us after the manner of men, he never does it in any thing that is in its own nature evil and ſinful

Thirdly,

Thirdly, From the great Uſefulneſs of Oaths in humane affairs, to give credit and confirmation to our word, and to put an end to Conteſtations. Now that which ſerves to ſuch excellent purpoſes, and is ſo convenient for humane ſociety, and for mutual ſecurity and confidence among men, ought not eaſily to be preſumed unlawful, till it be plainly proved to be ſo. And if we conſider the nature of an oath, and every thing belonging to it, there is nothing that hath the leaſt appearance of evil in it. There is ſurely no evil in it, as it is an act of Religion; nor as it is an appeal to God as a witneſs and avenger in caſe we ſwear falſly; nor as it is a confirmation of a doubtful matter; nor as it puts an end to ſtrife and controverſie. And theſe are all the eſſential ingredients of an Oath, and the ends of it; and they are all ſo good, that they rather commend it, than give the leaſt colour of ground to condemn it. I proceed in the *Second* place, to ſhew the weakneſs and inſufficiency of the grounds of the contrary Opinion; whether from *Reaſon* or from *Scripture*.

Firſt, From *Reaſon*. They ſay the neceſſity of an Oath is occaſioned by the want of truth and fidelity among men.

And

And that every man ought to demean himſelf with that faithfulneſs and integrity as may give credit and confirmation to his word; and then Oaths will be needleſs. This pretence will be fully anſwered, if we conſider theſe two things.

1. That in matters of great importance no other obligation, beſides that of an oath, hath been thought ſufficient amongſt the beſt and wiſeſt of men to aſſert their fidelity to one another. *Even the beſt men* (to uſe the words of a great Author) *have not truſted the beſt men without it.* As we ſee in very remarkable inſtances, where Oaths have paſſed between thoſe who might be thought to have the greateſt confidence in one another: As between *Abraham* and his old faithful ſervant *Eliezer*, concerning the choice of a wife for his Son: Between Father and Son, *Jacob* and *Joſeph*, concerning the burial of his Father in the Land of *Canaan*: Between two of the deareſt and moſt intimate Friends, *David* and *Jonathan*, to aſſure their Friendſhip to one another; and it had its effect long after *Jonathan*'s death in the ſaving of *Mephiboſheth*, when reaſon of State and the ſecurity of his Throne ſeem'd to move *David* ſtrongly to the contrary; for it is expreſly

expreſly ſaid 2 *Sam.* 21. 7. that *David* ſpared *Mephiboſheth*, *Jonathan*'s *Son, becauſe of the oath of the Lord that was between them*; implyng, that had it not been for his oath, other conſiderations might probably have prevail'd with him to have permitted him to have been cut off with the reſt of *Saul's* Children

2. This Reaſon, which is alledged againſt Oaths among men, is much ſtronger againſt God's confirming his promiſes to us by an Oath. For he who is truth it ſelf is ſurely of all other moſt to be credited upon his bare word, and his oath needleſs to give confirmation to it; and yet he condeſcends to add his oath to his word; and therefore that reaſon is evidently of no force.

Secondly, From *Scripture*. Our Saviour ſeems altogether to forbid ſwearing in any caſe, *Matth.* 5. 33, 34. *Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid to them of old time, thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf: but I ſay unto you ſwear not at all; neither by heaven, &c. But let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil.* And this Law St. *James* recites, *chap.* 5. *verſ.* 12. as that which Chriſtians ought to have a very particular and principal regard to;

above all things my brethren swear not: And he makes the breach of this Law a damning sin, *lest ye fall into condemnation.* But the authority of our Saviour alone is sufficient, and therefore I shall only consider that Text.

And, because here lies the main strength of this opinion of the unlawfulness of Oaths, it is very fit that this Text be fully consider'd; and that it be made very evident, that it was not our Saviour's meaning by this prohibition wholly to forbid the use of Oaths.

But before I enter upon this matter, I will readily grant, that there is scarce any Errour whatsoever that hath a more plausible colour from Scripture, than this; which makes the case of those who are seduced into it the more pityable: But then it ought to be consider'd, how much this Doctrine of the unlawfulness of oaths reflects upon the Christian Religion: since it is so evidently prejudicial both to humane Society in general, and particularly to those persons that entertain it: neither of which ought rashly to be supposed and taken for granted, concerning any Law delivered by our Saviour: Because upon these terms it will be very hard for us to vindicate the divine wis-

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dom of our Saviour's Doctrine, and the Reasonableness of the Christian Religion. Of the inconvenience of this Doctrine to humane Society, I have spoken already. But besides this, it is very prejudicial to them that hold it. It renders them suspected to Government, and in many cases incapable of the common benefits of Justice and other privileges of humane Society, and exposeth them to great penalties as the constitution of all Laws and Governments at present is, and it is not easie to imagine how they should be otherwise. And which is very considerable in this matter, it sets those who refuse Oaths upon very unequal terms with the rest of Mankind, if where the estates and lives of men are equally concern'd, their bare testimonies shall be admitted without an Oath, and others shall be obliged to speak upon Oath: Nothing being more certain in experience, than that many men will lie for their interest when they will not be perjured, God having planted in the natural Consciences of men a secret dread of perjury above most other sins. And this inconvenience is so great, as to render those who refuse oaths in all cases almost intolerable to humane Society. I speak

not thiseither to bring them into trouble, or to perſwade them to meaſure truth by their intereſt: but on the other hand I muſt needs ſay, that it is no Argument either of a wiſe or good man to take up any opinion, eſpecially ſuch a one as is greatly to his prejudice, upon ſlight grounds. And this very conſideration that it is ſo much to their inconvenience, may juſtly move them to be very carefull in the examination of it.

This being premis'd, I come now to explain this Prohibition of our Saviour; and to this purpoſe, I deſire theſe *three* things may be well conſider'd.

Firſt, That ſeveral circumſtances of theſe words of our Saviour do manifeſtly ſhew that they ought to be interpreted in a limited ſence, as only forbidding ſwearing in common converſation; *needleſs* and *heedleſs* oaths (as one expreſſeth it) and in general all voluntary ſwearing unleſs upon ſome great and weighty cauſe, in which the glory of God and the good of the ſouls of Men is concerned. For that in ſuch caſes a voluntary oath may be lawful, I am induced to believe from the example of St. *Paul*, who uſeth it more than once upon ſuch occaſions; of which I ſhall hereafter give particular Inſtances. And

And this was the ſence of wiſe men among the *Heathen*, that men ſhonld not ſwear but upon neceſſity and great occaſion. Thus *Euſebius*, the Philoſopher in *Stobæus*, counſels men. *Some* (ſays he) *adviſe men to be carefull to ſwear the truth; but I adviſe principally that men do not eaſily ſwear at all*, that is, not upon any ſlight but only upon weighty occaſions; To the ſame purpoſe *Epictetus*, *Shun oaths wholly, if it be poſſible; if not, however as much as thou canſt:* And ſo likwiſe *Simplicius* in his *Comment* upon him, *We ought wholly to ſhun ſwearing, except upon occaſions of great neceſſity*: And *Quintilian* among the *Romans*, *In totum jurare, niſi ubi neceſſe eſt, gravi viro parum convenit; To ſwear at all, except where it is neceſſary, do's not well ſuit with a wiſe man.*

And, that this prohibition of our Saviour's ought to be underſtood of oaths in ordinary converſation, appears from the oppoſition which our Saviour makes, *Swear not at all; but let your communication be yea, yea*; That is, in your ordinary commerce and affairs do not interpoſe oaths, but ſay and do. And this is very much confirmed, in that our Saviour do's not under this general Prohibition, in-

ſtance in ſuch oaths as are expreſly by the name of God: The reaſon whereof is this; The *Jews* thought it unlawfull in ordinary communication to ſwear expreſly by the name of God, but lawfull to ſwear by the Creatures, as by *Heaven* and *Earth, &c.* So that our Saviour's meaning is as if he had ſaid, You think you may ſwear in common converſation provided you do not ſwear by the Name of God; but I ſay unto you, let your communication be without oaths of any kind: you ſhall not ſo much as ſwear by *heaven* or by *earth,* becauſe God is virtually invoked in every oath. And unleſs we ſuppoſe this to be our Saviour's meaning, I do not ſee what good Reaſon can be given why our Saviour ſhould only forbid them to ſwear by the Creatures, and not much rather by the Name of God; ſuch oaths being ſurely of all others moſt to be avoided, as being the moſt direct abuſe and profanation of the Name of God.

Secondly, It is very conſiderable to the explaining of this Prohibition, that there are the like general expreſſions in other *Jewiſh* Authors concerning this very matter, which yet muſt of neceſſity be thus limited. *Maimonides,* from the ancient

cient *Rabbies*, gives this Rule, that *it is beſt not to ſwear at all.* And *Philo* uſeth almoſt the ſame words. And *Rabbi Jonathan* comes very near our Saviour's expreſſion, when he ſays, *The juſt man will not ſwear at all; not ſo much as by the common Names of God, nor by his Attributes, nor by his Works, as by Heaven, or the Angels, or the Law.* Now it is not imaginable, that theſe learned *Jews* ſhould condemn Oaths in all caſes, when the Law of *Moſes* did in many caſes expreſly require them. And therefore they are to be underſtood of voluntary oaths in ordinary converſation. And that the *Jews* meant this by not ſwearing at all, ſeems to be very plain from a paſſage in *Joſephus*, who ſays that the *Sect* of *the Eſſenes* forbad their Diſciples to ſwear at all; and yet he tells us at the ſame time, that they who were admitted into that *Sect* took an oath to obſerve the Laws and Rules of it. So that they who forbad to ſwear at all, allowed of Oaths impoſed by the Authority of Superiours.

Thirdly, Which will peremptorily decide this matter, this Prohibition of our Saviour's cannot be underſtood to forbid all Oaths, without a plain contradiction to the undoubted practice of the primitive Chriſtians, and of the Apoſtles, and

even of our Lord himſelf. *Origen* and *Tertullian* tells us, that the Chriſtians refuſed to ſwear by the Emperor's *Genius*; not becauſe it was an Oath, but becauſe they thought it to be Idolatrous: But the ſame *Tertullian* ſays, that the Chriſtians were willing to ſwear *per ſalutem Imperatoris, by the health and ſafety of the Emperour. Athanaſius* being accuſed to *Conſtantius*, purged himſelf by oath, and deſired that his Accuſer might be put to his Oath *ſub atteſtatione veritatis, by calling the truth to witneſs*; by which form (ſays he) *we Chriſtians are wont to ſwear*. But which is more than this, S. *Paul*, upon weighty occaſions, do's ſeveral times in his *Epiſtles* call God to witneſs for the truth of what he ſays; which is the very formality of an oath. *God is my witneſs*, *Rom.* 1. 9. *As God is true, our word was not yea and nay*, 2 Cor. 1. 18. & *v.* 23. *I call God for a record upon my ſoul. Before God I lye not*, *Gal.* 1. 20. *God is my record*, *Phil.* 1. 8. *God is my witneſs*, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 5. Theſe are all unqueſtionable oaths; which we cannot imagine S. *Paul* would have uſed, had they been directly contrary to our Saviour's Law. And whereas ſome defend this upon account of his extraordinary Inſpiration, I cannot poſſibly ſee how this mends the matter. For certainly it

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is very inconvenient to ſay that they who were to teach the Precepts of Chriſt to others, did themſelves break them by inſpiration.

But I go yet farther, and ſhall urge an example beyond all exception.

Our Saviour himſelf (who ſurely would not be the firſt example of breaking his own Laws) did not refuſe to anſwer upon oath, being called thereto at his Trial. So we find *Matth.* 26.63. *The high Prieſt ſaid unto him, I abjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Chriſt the Son of God*; that is, he required him to anſwer this queſtion upon Oath. For among the *Jews*, the form of giving an oath to witneſſes and others was not by tendering a formal oath to them, as the cuſtom is among us, but by adjuring them, that is, requiring them to anſwer upon oath: As is plain from *Levit.* 5.1. *If a man hear the voice of ſwearing, and is a witneſs whether he hath ſeen or known of ſuch a thing, if he do not utter it, then he ſhall bear his Iniquity. If he have heard the voice of ſwearing*, that is, if being adjured or demanded to anſwer upon oath concerning what he hath ſeen or heard, he do not utter the truth, he is perjured. Now to this adjuration of the high Prieſt our

our Saviour anſwered, *thou haſt ſaid*; which words are not an avoiding to anſwer (as ſome have thought) but a direct anſwer, as if he had ſaid, *it is as thou ſayeſt, it is even ſo, I am the Son of God.* For upon this anſwer the high Prieſt ſaid, *he hath ſpoken blaſphemy.* But to put the matter beyond all doubt, St. *Mark* tells us, *Mark* 14. 61. that he being asked by the high Prieſt, *Art thou the Chriſt the Son of the Bleſſed? He anſwered, I am.* So that unleſs we will interpret our Saviour's Doctrine contrary to his own practice, we cannot underſtand him to forbid all Oaths, and conſequently they are not unlawful.

I have been the longer upon this, that I might give clear ſatisfaction in this matter to thoſe that are willing to receive it.

As for the *Ceremonies* in uſe among us in the taking of Oaths, it is no juſt Exception againſt them, that they are not found in Scripture. For this was always matter of liberty; and ſeveral Nations have uſed ſeveral Rites and Ceremonies in their Oaths. It was the cuſtome of the *Grecians*, to ſwear laying their hands upon the Altar, *quod ſanctiſſimum jusjurandum eſt habitum*, (ſaith *A. Gellius*) *which was looked upon as the moſt ſacred form of Swearing.* The *Romans* were wont

Jovem

Jovem Lapidem jurare; that is, he that ſwore by *Jupiter* held a flint ſtone in his hand, and flung it violently from him with theſe words, *Si ſciens fallo ita me Jupiter bonis omnibus ejiciat ut ego hunc Lapidem*; *If I knowingly falſify, God ſo throw me out of all my poſſeſſions as I do this ſtone.*

In *Scripture* there are *two* Ceremonies mentioned of Swearing. *One*, of *putting the hand under the Thigh* of him to whom the Oath was *made*. Thus *Eliezer* ſwore to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 24. and *Joſeph* to *Jacob*, *Gen.* 47. The *other* was *by lifting up the hand to heaven*: Thus *Abraham* expreſſeth the manner of an Oath, *Gen.* 14.22. *I have lift up my hand to the moſt high God.* And thus God condeſcending to the manner of men expreſſeth himſelf, *Deut.* 32.40. *If I lift up my hand to heaven, and ſwear.* In alluſion to this Cuſtom the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribes the perjured perſon, *Pſal.* 144.8. *Whoſe mouth ſpeaketh vanity; and whoſe right hand is a right hand of falſhood.* And there is not the leaſt intimation in Scripture that either of theſe Ceremonies were preſcribed and appointed by God, but voluntarily inſtituted and taken up by men. And thus among us the Ceremony of Swearing is *by laying the hand on the holy Goſpel*,

Gospel, and *kissing the book*; which is both very solemn and significant. And this is the reason why this solemn kind of Oath is called, a *corporal* Oath, and was ancienly so called; because the sign or ceremony of it is performed by some part of the *Body*. And this Solemnity is an aggravation of the Perjury, because it makes it both more deliberate, and more scandalous.

I shall speak but briefly to the

IV. IV. And last particular, *viz.* the sacred *obligation* of an Oath: because it is a solemn appeal to God as a witness of the truth of what we say: To God, I say, from whose piercing and all-seeing eye, from whose perfect and infinite knowledg nothing is or can be hid; So that there is not a thought in our heart but he sees it, nor a word in our tongue but he discerns the truth or falshood of it. Whenever we swear, we appeal to his knowledg, and refer our selves to his just judgment who is the powerfull Patron and Protector of Right, and the Almighty Judge and avenger of all falshood and unrighteousness. So that it is not possible for men to lay a more sacred and solemn obligation upon their Consciences, than by the Religion of an Oath. *Moses* very well

well expreſſeth it, by *binding our ſouls with a bond*, Numb. 30. 2. *If a man ſwear an oath, to bind his ſoul with a bond*; intimating that he that ſwears lays the ſtrongeſt obligation upon himſelf, and puts his Soul in pawn for the truth of what he ſays. And this obligation no man can violate, but at the utmoſt peril of the judgment and vengeance of God. For every Oath implies a Curſe upon our ſelves in caſe of Perjury, as *Plutarch* obſerves. And this was always the ſenſe of Mankind concerning the obligation of Oaths. *Nullum vinculum ad aſtringendam fidem majores noſtri jurejurando arctius eſſe voluerunt*, ſaith *Tully*; *Our fore-fathers had no ſtricter bond whereby to oblige the faith of men to one another, than that of an Oath.* To the ſame purpoſe is that in the *Comedian*, *Aliud ſi ſcirem, qui firmare meam apud vos poſſem fidem, ſanctius quam jusjurandum, id pollicerer tibi. If I knew any thing more ſacred than an Oath, whereby to confirm to you the truth of what I ſay, I would make uſe of it.*

I will crave your patience a little longer, whilſt by way of inference from this Diſcourſe, I repreſent to you the great Sin of *Swearing in common converſation*, upon trivial and needleſs occaſions; and the hainouſneſs of the ſin of *Perjury*. 1. Firſt,

1. *First*, The great sin of *Swearing*, upon trivial and needless occasions, in common conversation. Because an Oath is a solemn thing, and reserved for great occasions, to give confirmation to our word in some weighty matter, and to put an end to controversies which cannot otherwise be peremptorily and satisfactorily decided. And therefore to use Oaths upon light occasions argues great profaneness and irreverence of Almighty God. So *Ulpian* the great *Roman* Lawyer observes, *Nonnullus esse facilies ad jurandum contemptu Religionis*, that *mens proneness to swearing comes from a contempt of Religion*; than which nothing disposeth men more to Atheism and Infidelity. Besides that it doth many times surprize men unawares into Perjury: And how can it be otherwise, when men use to interlard all their careless talk with Oaths, but that they must often be Perjur'd? And which is worse, it prepares men for deliberate perjury: For with those who are accustomed to swear upon light occasions, an Oath will go off with them more roundly about weightier matters. *From a common custome of swearing* (saith *Hierocles*) *men easily slide into perjury*; *Therefore* (says he) *if thou wouldst not be perjured, do not use to swear.* And this perhaps

haps is the meaning of St. *James*, when he cautions Christians so vehemently against common swearing, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὑπόκρισιν πέσητε, (for so some of the best ancient Copies read it) *lest ye fall into hypocrisie*, that is, lest ye lye and be perjured, by using your selves to rash and inconsiderate swearing.

And men expose themselves to this danger to no purpose; Oaths in common discourse being so far from confirming a man's word, that with wise men they much weaken it: For common swearing (if it have any serious meaning at all) argues in a man a perpetual distrust of his own reputation, and is an acknowledgement that he thinks his bare word not to be worthy of credit. And it is so far from adorning and filling a man's discourse, that it makes it look swoln and bloated, and more bold and blustring, than becomes persons of gentle and good breeding. Besides that it is a great incivility, because it highly offends and grates upon all sober and considerate persons; who cannot be presumed with any manner of ease and patience to hear God affronted, and his great and glorious Name so irreverently tost upon every slight occasion.

And it is no excuſe to men that many times they do it ignorantly, and not obſerving and knowing what they do. For certainly it is no extenuation of a fault, that a man hath got the habit of it ſo perfect that he commits it when he does not think of it. Which conſideration ſhould make men oppoſe the beginnings of this Vice, leſt it grow into a habit very hard to be left. *Nemo novit, niſi qui expertus eſt, quam ſit difficile conſuetudinem jurandi extinguere*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*; *No man knows, but he that hath tryed, how hard it is to get rid of this cuſtome of Swearing*: But yet it is certain men may do it, by reſolution and great care of themſelves: For he that can chuſe whether he will ſpeak or not, can chuſe whether he will ſwear or not when he ſpeaks. *Major conſuetudo majorem intentionem flagitat; The more inveterate a cuſtom is, the greater care ſhould be uſed to break our ſelves of it.*

In ſhort, This practice is ſo contrary to ſo plain a Precept of our Saviour, and by the breach whereof we incur ſo great a danger (as St. *James* aſſures us) that it muſt be a great charity that can find out a way to reconcile a common cuſtome of ſwearing with a ſerious belief

of

of the Chriſtian Religion: Which I would to God thoſe who are concerned would ſeriouſly lay to heart. Eſpecially, ſince this Sin of all others hath the leaſt of Temptation to it. Profit or Pleaſure there is none in it, nor any thing in mens natural tempers to incite them to it. For tho ſome men pour out Oaths ſo freely as if they came naturally from them, yet ſurely no man is born of a ſwearing conſtitution.

All that can be pretended for it, is Cuſtom and Faſhion: But to ſhew that this is no excuſe, it is very obſervable that it is particularly in the matter of Oaths and Perjury that the Holy Ghoſt gives that caution, *Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to do evil.*

And laſtly, it deſerves to be conſidered, that this ſin is ſo much the greater becauſe of the frequent returns of it in thoſe that are accuſtomed to it. So that altho it were but ſmall in it ſelf (as it is not) yet the frequent practice of this ſin would quickly mount it up to a great ſcore.

2. *Secondly*, To repreſent the heinouſneſs of the ſin of *Perjury*. But before I aggravate this Crime, it is fit to let men know how many ways they may be guilty of it.

1*ſt*. When a man aſſerts upon oath what he knows to be otherwiſe: Or promiſeth

miſeth what he does not intend to perform. In both theſe caſes the very act of ſwearing is Perjury. And ſo likewiſe when a man promiſeth upon oath to do that which it is unlawful for him to do becauſe this oath is contrary to a former obligation.

2dly. When a man is uncertain whether what he ſwear to, be true. This likewiſe is Perjury, in the act; though not of the ſame degree of guilt with the former, becauſe it is not ſo fully and directly againſt his knowledge and conſcience. For men ought to be certain of the truth of what they aſſert upon oath, and not to ſwear at a venture. And therefore no man ought poſitively to ſwear to the truth of any thing but what he himſelf hath ſeen or heard: This being the higheſt aſſurance men are capable of in this World. In like manner, he is guilty of perjury in the ſame degree, who promiſeth upon oath what he is not morally and reaſonably certain he ſhall be able to perform.

3dly. They are likewiſe guilty of Perjury, who do not uſe great plainneſs and ſimplicity in oaths; but anſwer *æquivocally* and doubtfully, or with reſervation of ſomething in their minds, thinking thereby to ſalve the truth of what they ſay. And we all know who they are that

that make uſe of theſe arts, and maintain them to be lawful; to the infinite ſcandal of the Chriſtian Religion and prejudice of humane Society, by doing what in them lies to deſtroy all Faith and mutual confidence among men. For what can be a greater affront to God, than to uſe his Name to deceive men? And what can more directly overthrow the great end and uſe of oaths, which are *for confirmation*, and to *put an end to Strife*? Whereas by theſe arts the thing is left in the ſame uncertainty it was before, and there is no deciſion of it. For there is hardly any form of words can be deviſed ſo plain, as not to be liable to Equivocation: To be ſure, a man when he ſwears may always reſerve ſomething in his mind which will quite alter the ſenſe of whatever he can ſay or promiſe upon oath. And this may be laid down for a certain Rule, That all departure from the ſimplicity of an oath is a degree of Perjury, and a man is never a whit the leſs forſworn becauſe his perjury is a little finer and more artificial than ordinary. And though men think by this device to ſave themſelves harmleſs from the guilt of ſo great a Sin, they do really increaſe it, by adding to their iniquity the impudent folly of mocking God and deceiving themſelves.

And whereas it is pleaded in the favour of *mental reſervation*, that the whole Propoſition, as made up of what is expreſt in words and of that which is reſerved in the mind, is true; For inſtance, if a man being ask'd upon Oath whether he be a Prieſt, ſhall anſwer he is not, reſerving in his mind that he is not a Prieſt of *Bacchus*, or ſome ſuch thing, the whole Propoſition is true, and then they ſay a man may ſwear to that which is true, without danger of perjury: This is of no force, becauſe, though the whole propoſition be true, it is deceitfull, and contrary to that ſincerity which ought to be in an oath: And the end of an oath is hereby likewiſe defeated, which is to aſcertain the truth of what we ſay: But if a man reſerve ſomething in his mind which alters the truth of what he ſays, the thing is ſtill as doubtfull and uncertain as it was before. Beſides, if this be a good reaſon, a man may ſwear with reſervation in all caſes; becauſe the reaſon equally extends to all caſes; for if the truth of the propoſition, as made up of what is expreſs'd in words and reſerv'd in the mind, will excuſe a man from Perjury, then no man can be perjur'd that ſwears with reſervation: But this the *Caſuiſts* of the *Roman* Church do

do not allow, but only in ſome particular caſes, as *before an incompetent Judge*, or the like; for they ſee well enough that if this were allow'd in all caſes, it would deſtroy all Faith among men. And therefore ſince the reaſon extends alike to all caſes, it is plain that it is to be allow'd in none.

4thly. He is guilty of Perjury after the act, who having a real intention when he ſwears, to perform what he promiſeth, yet afterwards neglects to do it: Not for want of Power (for ſo long as that continues the obligation ceaſeth) but for want of Will, and due regard to his oath.

Now that Perjury is a moſt heinous Sin, is evident, becauſe it is contrary to ſo plain and great a Law of God; one of the ten *Words* or *Precepts* of the Moral Law, *thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*; thou ſhalt not bring or apply the name of God to a falſhood: Or, as *Joſephus* renders it, *Thou ſhalt not adjure God to a falſe thing*: Which our *Saviour* renders yet more plainly, *Matth.* 5. 33. *Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf.* For he ſeems to refer to the *third* Commandment when he ſays, *Ye have heard that it was ſaid to them of old time, thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf*, as he had done before to the *6th* and *7th*.

when he ſays, *It was ſaid to them of old time, thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not commit adultery.* So that the primary, if not the ſole intention of this Law, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain,* is to forbid the great ſin of Perjury. And I do not remember that in Scripture the phraſe of *taking God's name in vain,* is uſed in any other ſenſe. And thus it is certainly uſed, *Prov.* 30. 9 *Leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of the Lord my God in vain, i. e.* leſt Poverty ſhould tempt me to ſteal, and ſtealth ſhould engage me in Perjury. For among the *Jews* an oath was tendered to him that was ſuſpected of theft, as appears from *Levit.* 6. 2. where it is ſaid, *If any one be guilty of theft, and lyeth concerning it, or ſweareth falſly; he ſhall reſtore all that about which he hath ſworn falſly. Leſt I ſteal, and take the name of the Lord my God in vain;* that is, be perjured, being examined upon oath concerning a thing ſtoln. And for this reaſon the thief and the perjured perſon are put together, *Zech.* 5. 4. where it is ſaid, that *a curſe ſhall enter into the houſe of the thief, and of him that ſweareth falſly by the name of God.* From all which it is very probable, that the whole intention of the 3*d.* Command-

ment

ment is to forbid this great ſin of Perjury. To deter men from which, a ſevere threatning is there added; *for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain*; that is, he will moſt ſeverely puniſh ſuch a one. And 'tis very obſervable, that there is no threatning added to any other Commandment, but to *this* and the *ſecond*; Intimating to us that, next to Idolatry and the worſhip of a falſe God, Perjury is one of the greateſt affronts that can be offered to the divine Majeſty. This is one of thoſe ſins that cries ſo loud to Heaven, and quickens the pace of God's judgments, *Mal.* 3. 9. *I will come near to you in judgement, and be a ſwift witneſs againſt the ſwearer*: For this God threatens utter deſtruction to the man and his houſe, *Zech.* 5.4. ſpeaking of the *curſe that goeth over the face of the whole earth*; *God* (ſays he) *will bring it forth, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by the name of God, and ſhall remain in the midſt of his houſe, and ſhall conſume it, with the timber thereof and the ſtones thereof. It ſhall remain in the midſt of his houſe, and ſhall conſume it.* This ſin by the ſecret judgment of God undermines Eſtates and Families to the utter ruine of them. And among the *Heathen* it was

always reckoned one of the greateſt of Crimes, and which they did believe God did not only puniſh upon the guilty perſon himſelf, but upon his family and poſterity; and many times upon whole Nations, as the *Prophet* alſo tells us, that *becauſe of Oaths the Land mourns.*

I need not uſe many words to aggravate this ſin; it is certainly a Crime of the higheſt nature. Deliberate Perjury being directly againſt a man's knowledge, ſo that no man can commit it without ſtaring his Conſcience in the face; which is one of the greateſt aggravations of any Crime. And it is equally a ſin againſt *both Tables*; being the higheſt affront to God, and of moſt injurious conſequence to men. It is an horrible abuſe of the name of God, an open contempt of his Judgment, and an inſolent defiance of his Vengeance: And in reſpect of men, it is not only a wrong to this or that particular perſon who ſuffers by it, but Treaſon againſt humane Society; ſubverting at once the foundations of publick Peace and Juſtice, and the private ſecurity of every mans life and fortune. It is a defeating of the beſt and laſt way that the wiſdom of men could deviſe for the deciſion of doubtfull matters. *Solomon* very fully and

and elegantly expreſſeth the deſtructive nature of this ſin, *Prov.* 25.18. *A falſe witneſs againſt his neighbour is a maul, and a ſword, and a ſharp arrow*: Intimating, that amongſt all the inſtrumens of ruine and miſchief that have been deviſed by mankind, none is of more pernicious conſequence to humane Society than Perjury, and breach of Faith. It is a *peſtilence that* uſually *walketh in darkneſs*, and a ſecret ſtab and blow againſt which many times there is no poſſibility of defence.

And therefore it highly concerns thoſe who upon theſe and the like occaſions are called upon their Oath, whether as *Jurors* or *Witneſſes*, to ſet God before their eyes, and to have his fear in their hearts whenever they come to take an oath. And to govern and diſcharge their conſciences in this matter by known and approved Rules, and by the Reſolutions of pious and wiſe men, and not by the looſe Reaſonings and Reſolutions of *Pamphlets*, ſent abroad to ſerve the turns of unpeaceable and ill-minded men (whether *Atheiſts*, or *Papiſts*, or others) on purpoſe to debauch the Conſciences of men by teaching them to play faſt and looſe with oaths. And it is a very ſad ſign of the decay of Chriſtian Religion amongſt us, to ſee ſo many who call themſelves

ſelves Chriſtians, to make ſo little conſcience of ſo great a ſin, as even the Light of Nature would bluſh and tremble at.

I will conclude all with thoſe excellent *Sayings* of the Son of *Sirach* concerning theſe two ſins (I have been ſpeaking of) of Prophane Swearing and Perjury, *Ec.* 23. 9, 10, &c. *Accuſtom not thy mouth to ſwearing; neither uſe thy ſelf to the naming of the holy One. A man that uſeth much ſwearing ſhall be filled with iniquity, and the plague ſhall never depart from his houſe. If he ſhall offend, his ſin ſhall be upon him; and if he acknowledg not his ſin, he maketh a double offence. And if he ſwear falſly he ſhall not be innocent, but his houſe ſhall be full of calamities.* And to repreſent to us the dreadfull nature of this ſin of Perjury, *There is* (ſaith he) *a word that is cloathed about with death*, meaning a raſh and falſe Oath; *There is a word that is cloathed about with death, God grant it be not found in the heritage of Jacob: for all ſuch things ſhall be far from the godly; and they will not wallow in theſe ſins.* From which God preſerve all good men, and make them carefull to preſerve themſelves; as they value the preſent peace of their own conſciences, and the favour of Almighty God in this world and the other, for his mercies ſake in *Jeſus Chriſt*. *To whom*, &c.

A

A

SERMON

Preached at the

FUNERAL

Of the Reverend

Mr. *THOMAS GOUGE*,

the 4th of *Novemb.* 1681.

At St. *Anne's Blackfryars*;

With a brief account of his Life.

A

SERMON

Preached at the

FUNERAL

Of the Reverend

Mr. THOMAS GOUGE,

Who died November 1681.

At St. Anne's Blackfryars;

With a brief account of his Life.

TO

The Right Worſhipful

THE

PRESIDENT,

THE

TREASURER,

And the reſt of the worthy Governors of the *Hoſpital* of *Chriſt-Church* in *LONDON.*

WHEN *upon the requeſt of ſome of the Relations and Friends of the Reverend Mr.* Gouge *deceaſed, and, to ſpeak the truth, in com-*

compliance with mine own inclination to do right to the memory of so good a man, and to set so great an Example in the view of all men, I had determined to make this Discourse publick; I knew not where more fitly to address it than to your selves who are the living pattern of the same Vertue, and the faithfull dispensers and managers of one of the best and greatest Charities in the world; especially since he had a particular relation to you, and was pleased for some years last past, without any other consideration but that of Charity, to employ his constant pains in Catechising the poor Children of your Hospital; wisely considering of how great consequence it was to this City, to have the foundations of Religion well laid in the tender years of so many persons as were afterwards to be planted

planted there in ſeveral Profeſſions; and from a true humility of mind, being ready to ſtoop to the meaneſt office and ſervice to do good.

I have heard from an intimate friend of his that he would ſometimes with great pleaſure ſay, that he had two Livings *which he would not exchange for two of the greateſt in* England, *meaning* Wales *and* Chriſt's Hoſpital; *Contrary to common account he eſteemed every advantage of being uſeful and ſerviceable to God and men a* rich Benefice, *and thoſe his beſt* Patrons *and* Benefactors, *not who did him good, but who gave him the opportunity and means of doing it. To you therefore as his* Patrons *this Sermon doth of right belong, and to you I humbly dedicate it; heartily beſeeching Almighty God, to raiſe*

up

up many by his example that may ſerve their generation according to the will of God, *as he did. I am*

Your Faithfull

and humble Servant

Jo. Tillotſon.

A

SERMON

Preached at the Funeral of

Mr. *THOMAS GOUGE.*

With a ſhort account of his Life.

LUKE 20. 37, 38.

Now that the dead are raiſed, even Moſes ſhewed at the buſh, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; For all live to him.

THE occaſion of theſe words of our bleſſed Saviour was an objection which the *Sadduces* made againſt the Reſurrection, grounded

ded upon a caſe which had ſometimes happened among them, of a Woman that had had ſeven Brethren ſucceſſively to her Husbands. Upon which caſe they put this Queſtion to our Saviour; *whoſe wife of the ſeven ſhall this woman be at the Reſurrection*? That is, if men live in another world, how ſhall the controverſie betwen theſe ſeven Brethren be decided? for they all ſeem to have an equal claim to this Woman, each of them having had her to his wife.

This captious Queſtion was not eaſie to be anſwered by the *Phariſees*, who fancied the enjoyments of the next life to be of the ſame kind with the ſenſual Pleaſures of this world, only greater and more durable. From which Tradition of the *Jews* concerning a ſenſual Paradiſe, *Mahomet* ſeems to have taken the pattern of his: as he did likewiſe many other things from the *Jewiſh* Traditions. Now upon this ſuppoſition, that in the next life there will be marrying and giving in marriage, it was a Queſtion not eaſily ſatisfied, Whoſe wife of the ſeven this woman ſhould then be?

But our Saviour clearly avoids the whole force of it, by ſhewing the different ſtate of men in this world, and in the

the other. *The children of this world* (says he) *marry, and are given in marriage; but they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.* And he does not barely and magisterially assert this Doctrine, but gives a plain and substantial Reason for it it; because *they cannot dye any more.* After men have lived a while in this world they are taken away by death, and therefore marriage is necessary to maintain a succession of mankind; but in the other world men shall become immortal and live for ever, and then the reason of marriage will wholly cease: For when men can die no more there will then be no need of any new supplies of mankind.

Our Saviour having thus cleared himself of this Objection by taking away the ground and foundation of it, he produceth an Argument for the Proof of the resurrection, in the words of my Text; *Now that the dead are raised, Moses even shewed at the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,* That is, when in one of his Books God is brought in speaking to him out of the Bush, and calling

himſelf by the title of the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Iſaac*, and the God of *Jacob*. From whence our Saviour infers the Reſurrection, becauſe *God is not the God of the dead but of the living: For all live to him.*

My deſign from theſe words is, to ſhew the force and ſtrength of this Argument which our Saviour urgeth for the proof of the Reſurrection. In order whereunto I ſhall,

Firſt, Conſider it as an Argument *ad hominem*, and ſhew the fitneſs and force of it to convince thoſe with whom our Saviour diſputed.

Secondly. I ſhall enquire, Whether it be more than an Argument *ad hominem*. And if it be, wherein the real and abſolute force of it doth conſiſt?

And then, I ſhall apply this Doctrine of the Reſurrection to the preſent Occaſion.

I. I. *Firſt*. We will conſider it as an Argument *ad hominem*, and ſhew the fitneſs and force of it to convince thoſe with whom our Saviour diſputed. And this will appear if we carefully conſider theſe *four* things.

1. What

1. What our Saviour intended directly and immediately to prove by this Argument.

2. The extraordinary veneration which the *Jews* in general had for the Writings of *Moſes*, above any other Bòoks of the Old Teſtament.

3. The peculiar notion which the *Jews* had concerning the uſe of this Phraſe or expreſſion of *God's being any ones God.*

4. The great reſpect which the *Jews* had for theſe three Fathers of their Nation, *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*. For each of theſe make our Saviour's Argument more forcible againſt thoſe with whom he diſputed.

Firſt. We will conſider what our Saviour intended directly and immediately to prove by this Argument. And that was this, That there is another ſtate after this life, wherein men ſhall be happy or miſerable according as they have lived in this world. And this doth not only ſuppoſe the immortality of the Soul, but foraſmuch as the Body is an eſſential part of man, doth by conſequence infer the reſurrection of the Body; becauſe otherwiſe the *man* would not be happy or miſerable

ſerable in the other world. But I cannot ſee any ſufficient ground to believe that our Saviour intended by this Argument directly and immediately to prove the reſurrection of the Body, but only by conſequence, and as it follows from the admiſſion of a future ſtate wherein men ſhall be rewarded or puniſhed. For that Reaſon of our Saviour, that *God is not a God of the dead but of the living*, if it did directly prove the reſurrection of the Body, it would prove that the Bodies of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* were raiſed to life again, at or before that time when God ſpake to *Moſes* and called himſelf the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*: But we do not believe this; and therefore ought not to ſuppoſe that it was the intention of our Saviour directly and immediately to prove the reſurrection of the Body, but only (as I ſaid before) a future ſtate. And that this was all our Saviour intended will more plainly appear, if we conſider what that Errour of the *Sadducees* was which our Saviour here confutes. And *Joſephus*, who very well underſtood the difference of the Sects among the *Jews*, and gives a particular account of them, makes not the leaſt mention of any Controverſie between the

Phariſees

Phariſees and the *Sadduces* about the reſurrection of the Body. All that he ſays, is this, That the *Phariſees* hold the Immortality of the Soul, and that there are Rewards and Puniſhments in another world: But the *Sadduces* denied all this, and that there was any other ſtate after this life. And this is the very ſame account with that which is given of them in the *New Teſtament*, *verſ.* 27. of this *Chapt.* *The Sadduces who deny that there is any reſurrection.* The meaning of which is more fully declared, *Act.* 23. 8. *The Sadduces ſay that there is no reſurrection, neither angel nor ſpirit; but the Phariſees confeſs both.* That is, the *Sadduces* denied that there was any other ſtate of men after this life, and that there was any ſuch thing as an immortal Spirit, either Angels, or the Souls of men ſurviving their Bodies. And, as Dr. *Hammond* hath judiciouſly obſerved, this is the true importance of the word ἀνάϛασις, *viz.* a *future* or *another ſtate*; unleſs in ſuch Texts where the Context does reſtrain it to the raiſing again of the Body, or where ſome word that denotes the *body*, as σῶμα or σαρκὸς, is added to it.

Secondly The force of this Argument againſt thoſe with whom our Saviour diſputed will further appear, if we conſider the great veneration which the *Jews* in general had for the Writings of *Moſes* above any other Books of the Old Teſtament; which they (eſpecially the *Sadduces*) looked upon only as Explications and Comments upon the Law of *Moſes*: But they eſteemed nothing as a neceſſary Article of Faith which had not ſome foundation in the Writings of *Moſes*. And this ſeems to me to be the true Reaſon why our Saviour choſe to confute them out of *Moſes*, rather than any other part of the Old Teſtament: And not as many learned men have imagined, becauſe the *Sadduces* did not receive any part of the Old Teſtament but only the *five* Books of *Moſes*; ſo that it was in vain to argue againſt them out of any other. This I know hath been a general opinion, grounded I think upon the miſtake of a paſſage in *Joſephus*, who ſays the *Sadduces only receive the written Law.* But if we carefully conſider that paſſage, we ſhall find that *Joſephus* doth not there oppoſe the Law to the *other Books* of the Old Teſtament, which were alſo *written*; but

but to *Oral Tradition.* For he ſays expreſly, that *the Sadduces only received the written Law, but the Phariſees, over and beſides what was written, received the Oral which they call Tradition.*

I deny not but that in the *later* Prophets there are more expreſs *Texts* for the proof of a future ſtate, than any are to be found in the Books of *Moſes.* As *Daniel* 12. 2. *And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt.* And indeed it ſeems very plain that holy men among the *Jews*, towards the expiration of the Legal diſpenſation, had ſtill clearer and more expreſs apprehenſions concerning a future ſtate than are to be met with in the Writings of *Moſes*, or of any of the *Prophets.*

The Law given by *Moſes* did ſuppoſe the *Immortality of the Souls of men*, and the *expectation of another life after this*, as Principles of Religion in ſome degree naturally known; but made no new and expreſs Revelation of theſe things. Nor was there any occaſion for it, the Law of *Moſes* being a Political Law, not intended for the Government of mankind, but of one particular Nation; and therefore

fore was eſtabliſh'd, as Political Laws are upon temporal promiſes and threatnings; promiſing temporal proſperity to the obſervation of its precepts, and threatning the breach of them with temporal judgments and calamities.

And this I take to be the true reaſon why arguments fetch'd from another world are ſo obſcurely inſiſted upon under that Diſpenſation; not but that another life after this was always ſuppos'd, and was undoubtedly the hope and expectation of good men under the Law, but the clear diſcovery of it was reſerv'd for the times of the *Meſſias*. And therefore as thoſe Times drew on, and *the Son of righteouſneſs* was nearer his riſing, the ſhadows of the night began to be chaſed away, and mens apprehenſions of a future ſtate to clear up; ſo that in the time of the *Maccabees* good men ſpake with more confidence and aſſurance of theſe things.

It is likewiſe to be conſider'd, that the temporal calamities and ſufferings with which the *Jews* were almoſt continually haraſs'd from the time of their Captivity had very much wean'd good men from the conſideration of temporal promiſes, and awaken'd their minds to the more

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ſerious thoughts of another world. It being natural to men when they are deſtitute of preſent comfort, to ſupport themſelves with the expectation of better things for the future, and as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* expreſſeth it, *ch. 6. v.* 18. *To fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is before them*, and to employ their reaſon to fortifie themſelves as well as they can in that perſuaſion.

And this I doubt not was the true occaſion of thoſe clearer and riper apprehenſions of good men concerning a future ſtate, in thoſe times of diſtreſs and perſecution: it being very agreeable to the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Divine Providence not to leave his People deſtitute of ſufficient ſupport under great trials and ſufferings: And nothing but the hopes of a better life could have born up the ſpirits of men under ſuch cruel tortures. And of this we have a moſt remarkable Inſtance in the Hiſtory of the *ſeven Brethren* in the *Maccabees*, who being cruelly tortured and put to death by *Antiochus*, do moſt expreſly declare their confident expectation of a reſurrection to a better life. To which Hiſtory the *Apoſtle* certainly refers, *Heb.* 11. 35. when he ſays, *others were tortured, not excepting deli-*

deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection: where the word, which we render *were tortur'd*, is ἐτυμπανίσθησαν, which is the very word uſed in the *Maccabees* to expreſs the particular kind of torture us'd upon them; beſides that being *offer'd deliverance* they moſt reſolutely *refus'd* to *accept* of it, with this expreſs declaration that they hop'd for a *reſurrection* to a *better* life.

But to return to my purpoſe, notwithſtanding there might be more clear and expreſs *Texts* to this purpoſe in the ancient *Prophets*, yet our Saviour knowing how great a regard not only the *Sadducees*, but all the *Jews* had to the Authority of *Moſes*, he thought fit to bring his proof of the reſurrection out of his Writings, as that which was the moſt likely to convince them.

Thirdly. If we conſider further the peculiar Notion which the *Jews* had concerning the uſe of this phraſe or expreſſion of *God's being any ones God*. And that was this. That God is no where in Scripture ſaid to be any ones God while he was alive. And therefore they tell us that while *Iſaac* lived, God is not called the God of *Iſaac*, but the *fear of Iſaac*. As

Gen.

Gen. 31. 42. *Except the God of Abraham, and the fear of Iſaac had been with me*; and *ver.* 53. when *Laban* made a Covenant with *Jacob*, 'tis ſaid that *Laban did ſwear by the God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, and the God of their Fathers*, but *Jacob* ſwore *by the fear of his Father Iſaac.* I will not warrant this Obſervation to be good, becauſe I certainly know it is not true. For God doth expreſly call himſelf the God of *Iſaac*, while *Iſaac* was yet alive, *Gen.* 28. 13. *I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Iſaac.* It is ſufficient to my purpoſe, that this was a Notion anciently currant among the *Jews.* And therefore our Saviour's Argument from this Expreſſion muſt be ſo much the ſtronger againſt *them*: For if the Souls of men be extinguiſhed by death (as the *Sadduces* believed) what did it ſignifie to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* to have God called *their God* after they were dead? But ſurely for God to be any ones God doth ſignifie ſome great benefit and advantage; which yet (according to the notion which the *Jews* had of this Phraſe) could not reſpect this life, becauſe, according to *them*, God is not ſaid to be any ones God till after he is dead: But it is thus ſaid of *Abraham*,

Iſaac

Iſaac and *Jacob* after their death, and therefore our Saviour infers very ſtrongly againſt *them*, that *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* were not extinguiſhed by death, but do ſtill live ſomewhere: for *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* And then he adds by way of further explication, *for all live to him.* That is, though thoſe good men who are departed this life, do not ſtill live *to us*, here in this world, yet *they live to God*, and are with him.

Fourthly. If we conſider the great reſpect which the *Jews* had for thoſe three Fathers of their Nation, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*. They had an extraordinary opinion of them, and eſteemed nothing too great to be thought or ſaid of them. And therefore we find that they looked upon it as a great arrogance for any man to aſſume any thing to himſelf that might ſeem to ſet him above *Abraham*, *Iſaac* or *Jacob*. With what indignation did they fly upon our Saviour on this account? *Joh.* 4. 12. *Art thou greater than our father Jacob?* and *chap.* 8. *ver.* 53. *Art thou greater than our father Abraham: whom makeſt thou thy ſelf?* Now they who had ſo ſuperſtitious a veneration for them,

them, would eaſily believe any thing of privilege to belong to them: ſo that our Saviour doth with great advantage inſtance in them, in favour of whom they would be inclined to extend the meaning of any promiſe to the utmoſt, and allow it to ſignifie as much as the words could poſſibly bear. So that it is no wonder that the *Text* tells us that this Argument put the *Sadducees* to ſilence. They durſt not attempt a thing ſo odious, as to go about to take away any thing of privilege from *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*.

And thus I have, as briefly as the matter would bear, endeavoured to ſhew the fitneſs and force of this Argument to convince thoſe with whom our Saviour diſputed. I come now, in the

II. *Second* place, to inquire, Whether this be any more than an argument *ad hominem*; And if it be, wherein the real and abſolute force of it doth conſiſt? II.

I do not think it neceſſary to believe that every Argument uſed by our Saviour or his Apoſtles, is abſolutely and in it ſelf concluſive of the matter in debate. For an Argument which doth not really prove the thing in Queſtion, may yet be a very good Argument *ad hominem*; and in

in ſome caſes more convincing to him with whom we diſpute than that which is a better Argument in it ſelf. Now it is poſſible, that our Saviour's intention might not be to bring a concluſive proof of the Reſurrection, but only to confute thoſe who would needs be diſputing with him. And to that purpoſe an Argument *ad hominem*, which proceeded upon grounds which they themſelves could not deny, might be very proper and effectual. But although it be not neceſſary to believe, that this was more than an Argument *ad hominem*; yet it it the better to us, if it be abſolutely and in it ſelf concluſive of the thing in Queſtion. And this I hope will ſufficiently appear, if we conſider theſe *four* things.

1. That for God to be *any ones God* doth ſignifie ſome very extraordinary bleſſing and happineſs, to thoſe perſons of whom this is ſaid.

2. If we conſider the eminent faith and obedience of the perſons to whom this promiſe is made.

3. Their condition in this world.

4. The general importance of this promiſe, abſtracting from the perſons particularly ſpecified and named in it, *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*.

Firſt.

First, If we consider, that for God to be *any ones God* doth signifie some very extraordinary blessing and happiness to those persons of whom this is said. It is a big word for God to declare himself to be *any ones God*: and the least we can imagine to be meant by it, is that God will in an extraordinary manner employ his power and wisdom to do him good: that he will concern himself more for the happiness of those whose God he declares himself to be, than for others.

Secondly, If we consider the eminent faith and obedience of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*. *Abraham* left his Countrey in obedience to God, not knowing whither he was to go. And which was one of the most unparallel'd and strange instances of faith and obedience that can almost be imagined, he was willing to have sacrificed his only Son at the command of God. *Isaac* and *Jacob* were also very good men, and devout worshippers of the true God, when almost the whole world was sunk into Idolatry and all manner of impiety. Now what can we imagine, but that the good God did design some extraordinary reward to such

faithful ſervants of his? eſpecially if we conſider, that he intended this gracious declaration of his concerning them, for a ſtanding encouragement to all thoſe who in after Ages ſhould follow the faith and tread in the ſteps of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*.

Thirdly. If we conſider the condition of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* in this world. The Scripture tells us, that *they were pilgrims and ſtrangers upon the earth*; had no fixed and ſettled habitation, but were forced to wander from one Kingdom and Countrey to another; that they were expoſed to many hazards and difficulties, to great troubles and afflictions in this world; ſo that there was no ſuch peculiar happineſs befell them in this life above the common rate of men, as may ſeem to fill up the big words of this promiſe, that *God would be their God*. For ſo far as the Scripture Hiſtory informs us, and further we cannot know of this matter, *Eſau* was as proſperous as *Jacob*; and *Jacob* had a great many more troubles and afflictions in this life than *Eſau* had. But ſurely when God calls himſelf *the God of Abraham*, *Iſaac and Jacob*, this ſignifies that God intended ſome very

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peculiar bleſſing and advantage to them above others: which ſeeing they did not enjoy in this world, it is very reaſonable to belive that one time or other this gracious declaration and promiſe of God, was made good to them.

And therefore the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, *chap.* 11. from this very expreſſion of *God's* being ſaid *to be the God* of *Abraham* and others, argues that ſome extraordinary happineſs was reſerved for them in another world: and that upon this very ground I am now ſpeaking of, namely, becauſe the condition of *Abraham* and ſome others, was not ſuch in this world as might ſeem to anſwer the fulneſs of this promiſe. *All theſe*, ſays he, *died in the faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſwaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims upon the earth.* From whence he reaſons very ſtrongly, that theſe good men might reaſonably expect ſomething better than any thing that had befallen them in this World. *For they*, ſays he, *that ſay ſuch things, declare plainly that they ſeek a Country*; which at the 16. *verſe* he calls *a better Country, that is a heavenly. They that ſay*

ſuch things: that is, they who acknowledg themſelves to be ſtrangers and pilgrims in the earth, and yet pretend that God had promiſed *to be their God*, declare plainly that they expect ſome reward beyond this life. From all which he concludes, *Wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God, becauſe he hath prepared for them a City*: Intimating that if no happineſs had remained for theſe good men in another world, this promiſe of God's *being their God*, would ſhamefully have fallen ſhort of what it ſeemed to import, *viz.* ſome extraordinary reward and bleſſing worthy of God to beſtow; ſomething more certain and laſting than any of the enjoyments of this world; which ſince God hath abundantly performed to them in the happineſs of another life, his promiſe to them was made good to the full, and he needed not *be aſhamed to be called their God*. But if nothing beyond this life had been reſerved for them, that Saying of old *Jacob* towards the concluſion of his life, *few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*, would have been an eternal reflection upon the truth and faithfulneſs of him who had ſo often called himſelf the God of *Jacob*.

But

But now, becauſe to all this it may be ſaid, that this Promiſe ſeems to have been made good to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, in this world: For was not God the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, when he took ſuch a particular and extraordinary care of them, and protected them from the manifold dangers they were expoſed to by ſuch a ſpecial and immediate providence, *ſuffering no one to do them harm, but rebuking even Kings for their ſakes*? Was not he *Abraham's* God, when he bleſt him ſo miraculouſly with a Son in his old Age, and with ſo conſiderable an eſtate to leave to him? Was not that ſaying of *Jacob* a great acknowledgement of the gracious providence of God towards him, *With my ſtaff paſſed I over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands*? And though it muſt needs be a very cutting affliction to him to loſe his Son *Joſeph*, as he thought he had done, yet that was more than recompenſed to him in *Joſeph's* ſtrange advancement in *Egypt*, whereby God put into his hands the opportunity of ſaving his Father and his whole Family alive. And was not God *the God of Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in making them Fathers of ſo numerous an off-ſpring, as afterwards be-

came a *great nation*: and in giving them a fruitful Land; and bringing them to the quiet poſſeſſion of it by ſuch a *ſeries* of wonderful Miracles? what need then is there of extending this promiſe to another world? doth it not ſeem abundantly made good in thoſe great bleſſings which God beſtowed upon them whilſt they liv'd, and afterwards upon their poſterity, in this world? And does not this agree well enough with the firſt and moſt obvious ſence of theſe words, *I am the God of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob*, that is, I am he that was their God while they were alive, and am ſtill the God of their poſterity for their ſakes; I ſay, becauſe the *three* former Conſiderations are liable to this Objection, which ſeems wholly to take off the force of this Argument; therefore for the full clearing of this matter, I will add one conſideration more.

Fourthly then, we will conſider the general importance of this Promiſe, abſtracting from the particular perſons ſpecified and named in it, *viz.* *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*; and that is, that God will make a wide and plain difference between good and bad men; he will be

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ſo the God of good men as he is not of the wicked: and ſome time or other put every good man into a better and happier condition than any wicked man: ſo that the general importance of this promiſe is finally reſolved into the equity and juſtice of the Divine Providence.

And unleſs we ſuppoſe another life after this, it will certainly be very hard, and I think impoſſible, to reconcile the Hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, and the common appearances of things in this World, with the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God's Providence.

It cannot be denied, but that *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and ſeveral good men in the Old Teſtament, had many ſignal Teſtimonies of the Divine favour vouchſafed to them in this world: But we read likewiſe of ſeveral wicked men that had as large a ſhare of temporal bleſſings. It is very true that *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, had great eſtates, and were petty Princes: But *Pharoah* was a mighty Prince in compariſon of them; and the Kingdom of *Egypt*, which probably was the firſt and chief ſeat of Idolatry, was at the ſame time one of the moſt potent and flouriſhing Kingdoms in the world: and was bleſt with a prodi-

gious plenty, whereby they were furniſhed with ſtore of corn when good *Jacob* and his Family had like to have periſhed by famine. 'Tis true, *Joſeph* was advanc'd to great power in *Egypt*, and thereby had the opportunity of ſaving his Father's houſe, by ſettling them and feeding them in *Egypt*: But then it is to be conſidered again, that this coſt them very dear, and their coming thither was the occaſion of a long and cruel bondage to *Jacob's* poſterity, ſo that we ſee that theſe good men had no ſuch bleſſings, but what were common with them to many others that were Wicked: and the bleſſings which God beſtowed upon them, had great abatements by the intermixture of many and ſore afflictions.

It ſeems then upon the whole matter, to be very plain, that the Providences of God in this world towards good men are ſo contrived, that it may ſufficiently appear, to thoſe who wiſely conſider the works of God, that they are not neglected by him; and yet that theſe outward bleſſings are ſo promiſcuouſly diſpenſed, that no man can certainly be concluded to be a good man from any happineſs he enjoys in this life: And the

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Proſperity of good men is uſually on purpoſe ſo ſhadowed and mixed with afflictions, as may juſtly raiſe their hopes to the expectation of a more perfect happineſs and better reward than any they meet with in this world.

And if ſo, then the general importance of this Promiſe, that *God will be the God* of good men, muſt neceſſarily ſignifie ſomething beyond this world: Becauſe in this world there is not that clear difference univerſally made between good and bad men which the Juſtice of the Divine Providence doth require, and which ſeems to be intended, in the general ſence of this Promiſe. For if this Promiſe (though perſonally made to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*) be intended, as the Scripture tells us it was for a ſtanding encouragement to good men in all Ages, then it muſt contain in it this general Truth, *that God will ſome time or other plentifully reward every good man*, that is; he will do ſomething far better for him than for any wicked man: But if there be no life after this, it is impoſſible to reconcile this ſenſe of it with the courſe of God's Providence, and with the Hiſtory of the Bible.

And

And to make this out fully and at once, I will only produce that ſingle Inſtance of *Abel* and *Cain*. *Abel* offered to God *a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain*, and he *had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God*; which was in effect to declare, that *God was the God of Abel* and not of *Cain*; ſo that by virtue of the general importance of this Promiſe, it might juſtly be expected that *Abel's* condition ſhould have been much better than *Cain's*: But if there be no happineſs after this life, *Abel's* was evidently much worſe. For upon this very account, that *he pleaſed God better*, he was killed by *Cain*, who had offered to God a ſlight and contemptuous offering. And *Cain* lived a long time after, and grew great, and *built Cities*. Now ſuppoſing there were no other life after this, this muſt have been a moſt horrible Example to all Ages, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, and have made men for ever afraid to pleaſe God upon ſuch hard terms; when they were ſure of no other reward for ſo doing, but to be oppreſs'd and ſlain by the hands of the wicked. So that if this were really the Caſe, it would puzzle all the Wit and Reaſon of mankind to vindicate the equity

quity and juſtice of the Divine Providence, and to reſcue it out of the hands of this terrible Objection.

And thus have I as briefly as I could, endeavoured to clear to you the force of this Argument uſed by our Saviour for the Proof of the Reſurrection. And have the longer inſiſted upon it, becauſe at firſt appearance it ſeems to be but a very obſcure and remote Argument: And yet ſo much the more neceſſary to be clear'd, becauſe this in all probability was that very *Text* upon which the *Jews* in our Saviour's time grounded their belief of a future ſtate, in oppoſition to the error of the *Sadduces*; and which they call'd by way of eminency *the promiſe made of God unto the Fathers.* As will plainly appear, if we conſider what St. *Paul* ſays to this purpoſe; when he appeals ſo often to the *Phariſees* for his agreement with them in this Article of the Reſurrection, and likewiſe in the ground of it from *the promiſe made of God unto the fathers.* Act. 24. 14, 15. *But this I confeſs unto thee, that after the way which they call hereſie, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets;*

phets; and have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead. From whence it is clear, that they both grounded their hope of the reſurrection upon ſomething *written in the Law and the Prophets*: and what that was, he expreſſeth more particular, *c.* 26. *v.* 6, 7. *And now I ſtand, and am judged for the hope of the promiſe made of God unto our Fathers; unto which promiſe our twelve Tribes, inſtantly ſerving God day and night, hope to come. By the promiſe made of God unto the Fathers*, he means ſome promiſe made by God to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*; for ſo S. *Luke* more than once, in his Hiſtory of the *Acts*, explains this phraſe *of the God of their Fathers*, Acts 3. 13. *The God of Abraham, and of Iſaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers*; and *c.* 7. *v.* 32. *I am the God of thy Fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob.* Now what was the great and famous Promiſe which God made to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*? was it not this of being *their God*? So that it was this very Promiſe upon which S. *Paul* tells us the *Jews* grounded their hope of a future ſtate, becauſe they underſtood it neceſſarily to ſignifie ſome

bleſſing

bleſſing and happineſs beyond this life.

And now having, I hope, ſufficiently clear'd this matter, I ſhall make ſome improvement of this Doctrine of a future ſtate, and that to theſe three purpoſes.

1. To raiſe our minds above this world and the enjoyments of this preſent life. Were but men thoroughly convinced of this plain and certain Truth, that there is a vaſt difference between Time and Eternity, between a few years and everlaſting Ages: would we but repreſent to our ſelves what thoughts and apprehenſions dying perſons have of this world; how vain and empty a thing it appears to them, how like a pageant and a ſhadow it looks as it paſſeth away from them, methinks none of thoſe things could be a ſufficient temptation to any man to forget God and his Soul; but, notwithſtanding all the delights and pleaſures of ſenſe, we ſhould be ſtrangely intent upon the concernments of another world, and almoſt wholly taken up with the thoughts of that vaſt Eternity which we are ready to launch into. For what is there in this world, this *waſte and howling wilderneſs*, this rude and barbarous Country which we are but to paſs through,

through, which ſhould detain our affections here, and take off our thoughts from our everlaſting habitation; from that better and that *heavenly Country*, where we hope to live and be happy for ever?

If we ſettle our affections upon the enjoyments of this preſent Life, ſo as to be extremely pleas'd and tranſported with them, and to ſay in our hearts, *It is good for us to be here*; if we be exceſſively griev'd or diſcontented for the want or loſs of them, and if we look upon our preſent ſtate in this world any otherwiſe than as a preparation and paſſage to a better life, it is a ſign that our faith and hope of the happineſs of another life is but very weak and faint, and that we do not heartily and in good earneſt believe what we pretend to do concerning theſe things. For did we ſteadfaſtly believe and were thoroughly perſwaded of what our Religion ſo plainly declares to us concerning the unſpeakable and endleſs happineſs of good men in another world, our affections would ſit more looſe to this world, and our hopes would raiſe our hearts as much above theſe preſent and ſenſible things *as the heavens are high above the earth*; we ſhould value nothing

thing here below, but as it ſerves for our preſent ſupport and paſſage, or may be made a means to ſecure and encreaſe our future felicity.

2. The conſideration of another Life ſhould quicken our preparation for that bleſſed ſtate which remains for us in the other world. This Life is a ſtate of probation and trial. This world is God's ſchool, where immortal ſpirits clothed with fleſh are trained and bred up for eternity. And then certainly it is not an indifferent thing and a matter of ſlight concernment to us, how we live and demean our ſelves in this world: whether we indulge our ſelves *in ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*, or *live ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly* in this preſent world: No; it is a matter of infinite moment, as much as our Souls and all eternity are worth. Let us not deceive our ſelves; *for as we ſow ſo ſhall we reap: If we ſow to the fleſh, we ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; but if we ſow to the ſpirit, we ſhall of the ſpirit reap everlaſting life. Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart. The Righteous hath hopes in his death. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright,*

upright, for the end of that man is peace.

But the ungodly are not ſo: whoever hath lived a wicked and vicious life, feels ſtrange throws and pangs in his conſcience when he comes to be caſt upon a ſick bed. *The wicked is like the troubled ſea* (ſaith the *Prophet*) *when it cannot reſt*; full of trouble and confuſion, eſpecially in a dying hour. It is death to ſuch a man to look back upon his life, and a hell to him to think of eternity. When his guilty and trembling Soul is ready to leave his Body, and juſt ſtepping into the other world, what horrour and amazement do then ſeiſe upon him? what a rage doth ſuch a man feel in his breaſt, when he ſeriouſly conſiders, that he hath been ſo great a fool as for the falſe and imperfect pleaſure of a few days to make himſelf miſerable for ever?

3. Let the conſideration of that unſpeakable Reward which God hath promiſed to good men at the Reſurrection, encourage us to obedience and a holy life. We ſerve a great Prince who is able to promote us to honour; a moſt gracious Maſter who will not let the leaſt ſervice we do for him paſs unrewarded. This is the inference which the Apoſtle makes

makes from this large diſcourſe of the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* Nothing will make death more welcome to us than a conſtant courſe of ſervice and obedience to God. *Sleep*, ſaith *Solomon*, *is ſweet to the labouring man*: ſo after a great diligence and induſtry in *working out our own ſalvation*, and (as it is ſaid of *David*) *ſerving our generation according to the will of God*, how pleaſant will it be to fall aſleep? And as an uſeful and well-ſpent life will make our death to be ſweet, ſo our reſurrection to be glorious. Whatever acts of Piety we do to God, or of charity to men; whatever we lay out upon the poor and afflicted and neceſſitous, will all be conſidered by God in the day of recompences, and moſt plentifully rewarded to us.

And ſurely no conſideration ought to be more prevalent to perſwade us to alms-deeds and charity to the poor, than that of a Reſurrection to another life. Beſides the promiſes of this life which are made to works of charity, and there is

not any grace or vertue whatſoever, which hath ſo many and ſo great promiſes of temporal bleſſings made to it in Scripture as this grace of charity; I ſay, beſides the promiſes of this Life, the great promiſe of eternal Life is in Scripture in a more eſpecial manner entail'd upon it. *Luke* 12. 33. *Give alms*, ſaith our Saviour, *provide your ſelves baggs which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens that faileth not*; and *c.* 9. *v.* 19. *make to your ſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when ye ſhall fail they may receive you into everlaſting habitations.* And 1 *Tim.* 6. 17, 18, 19. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded*, &c. *that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life*; *the word* θεμέλιον, which our Tranſlation renders *foundation* according to the common uſe of it, ſeems in this place to have a more peculiar notion, and to ſignifie the *ſecurity* that is given by a *pledge*, or by an *inſtrument* or obligation of *contract* for the performance of *Covenants*. For beſides that the phraſe of *laying up in ſtore, or treaſuring*

up

up a foundation, ſeems to be a very odd jumbling of meraphors; this very word θεμέλιος almoſt neceſſarily requires this notion as it is uſed by the ſame *Apoſtle*, in his ſecond *Epiſtle* to *Timothy*, chap. 2. ver. 19. where it is ſaid, *the foundation of God ſtands ſure, having this ſeal*, &c. a *ſeal* being very improper *to ſtrengthen a foundation*, but very fit *to confirm a Covenant*. And then ſurely it ought to be render'd, *the Covenant of God remains firm, having this ſeal*. And ſo likewiſe in the foremention'd Text, the ſence will be much more eaſie and current if we render it thus, *treaſuring up, or providing for themſelves a good ſecurity* or *pledge againſt the time to come*; I add *pledge*, becauſe that anciently was the common way of ſecurity for things lent: beſides that the Apoſtle ſeems plainly to allude to that paſſage, *Tobit*, 4. 8, 9. *If thou haſt abundance, give alms accordingly*, &c. *for thou layeſt up a good treaſure for thy ſelf againſt the day of neceſſity*, θέμα γὰρ ἀγαθὸν σεαυτῷ τίθεις, *for thou treaſureſt up for thy ſelf a good pledge*; to which this of the Apoſtle exactly anſwers, ἀποθησαυρίζοντας ἑαυτοῖς θεμέλιον καλὸν, *treaſuring up*, or *providing for themſelves a good pledge or ſecurity*, &c. the ſence however

is plain, that the charity of Alms is one of the best ways of securing our future happiness.

And yet further to encourage us to abound in works of charity, the Scripture tells us that proportionably to the degrees of our charity shall be the degrees of our reward; upon this consideration the *Apostle* exhorts the *Corinthians* to be liberal in their charity, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. *he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, but he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.* So that whatever we lay out in this kind is to the *greatest advantage*, and upon the *best security*; two considerations which use to be very prevalent with rich men to lay out their money.

We certainly do it to the *greatest advantage*; because God will consider the very smallest thing that any of us do in this kind. He that shall *give* so much as *a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward*; these last words, *shall not lose his reward*, are a μείωσις, and signifie much more than they seem to speak, *viz.* that he shall have a very great reward, infinitely beyond the value of what he hath done.

And

And we do it likewiſe upon the *beſt ſecurity*; ſo *Solomon* aſſures us, *Prov.* 19. 17. *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again:* and we may be confident of our ſecurity where God is ſurety; nay, he tells us that in this caſe he looks upon himſelf as principal, and that whatever we do in ways of mercy and charity to the poor he takes as done to himſelf. So our Lord hath told us, *Matt.* 25. 40. and we ſhall hear the ſame from him again out of his own mouth when he ſhall appear in his Majeſty to judg the World, *Then the King ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

And on the other ſide, the Scripture no where paſſeth a more ſevere doom upon any ſort of perſons, than upon thoſe who have no bowels of compaſſion towards their brethren in diſtreſs. That is a fearfull ſentence indeed, which the Apoſtle pronounceth upon ſuch perſons, *Jam.* 2. 13. *He ſhall have judgment without mercy that hath ſhewed no mercy.* And this our Saviour repreſents to us in a moſt ſolemn manner, in that lively de-

ſcription which he makes of the Judgment of the great day, *Matt.* 25. 31, &c. *When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory: and before him ſhall be gathered all nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from the goats. And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on the right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, before the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. Then ſhall He ſay, alſo unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat*, &c. *And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life eternal.* And if this be, as moſt certainly it is, a true and proper repreſentation of the proceſs of that Day, then the great matter of enquiry will be, What works of charity and mercy have

been

been done or neglected by us, and accordingly a Sentence of eternal happineſs, or miſery, will be paſs'd upon us: I was hungry, did ye feed me or did ye not? I was naked, did ye clothe me or did ye not? I was ſick and in priſon, did ye viſit me or did ye not? Not but that all the good or evil of our lives, in what kind ſoever, ſhall then be brought to account; But that our Saviour did chuſe to inſtance particularly, and only in things of this nature, ſhould methinks make a mighty impreſſion upon us, and be a powerfull conſideration to oblige us to have a very peculiar regard to works of mercy and charity, and to make ſure to *abound in this Grace*; that when we ſhall appear before the great Judge of the world we may find that mercy from Him which we have ſhew'd to others, and which we ſhall all undoubtedly ſtand in need of *in that Day*.

And among all our acts of charity, thoſe which are done upon leaſt probability and foreſight of their meeting with any recompence in this world, either by way of real requital or of fame and reputation, as they are of all other moſt acceptable to God, ſo they will certainly have the moſt ample reward in another world. So our Lord hath aſſur'd us, and

accordingly adviſeth us, *Luke* 14. 12, 13, 14. *When thou makeſt a feaſt, invite not the rich, becauſe they will recompenſe thee again: but call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, for they cannot recompenſe thee, but thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.* If we be Religious for worldly ends, and ſerve God, and do good to men, onely in contemplation of ſome temporal advantage, we take up with preſent payment, and cut our ſelves ſhort of our future reward: of ſuch, ſaith our Lord, *Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward*; they are their own ſecurity, and have taken care to ſatisfy themſelves, and therefore are to expect nothing from God. But let us who call our ſelves Chriſtians do ſomething for God, for which we have no hopes to be recompenſed in this world; that we may ſhew that we truſt God and take his word, and dare venture upon the ſecurity of the next world, and that *recompenſe* which ſhall be made *at the reſurrection of the juſt.*

And how great and glorious that ſhall be, our Saviour tells us immediately before my *Text*. *They that ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection from the dead, they can die no more,*

more, but they are equal to the Angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the reſurrection.

If then we be heirs of ſuch glorious hopes, and believe that he who is *the God of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob*, will alſo be our God; let us live as it becomes the Candidates of heaven, and *the children of the reſurrection*, and ſuch as verily believe another life after this, and hope one day to *ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God.*

And now that I have repreſented to you what encouragement there is to well-doing, and particularly to works of Charity, from the conſideration of the bleſſed reward we ſhall certainly meet with at the Reſurrection of the juſt; I ſhall crave your patience a little longer, whilſt I propoſe to you one of the faireſt Examples of this kind which either this or perhaps any other Age could eaſily preſent us withall: I mean our deceaſed Brother to whom we are now paying our laſt ſolemn reſpects, the Reverend Mr. *THOMAS GOUGE*; the worthy Son of a reverend and learned Divine of this City, Dr. *William Gouge*; who was Miniſter of this Pariſh of *Black-Friars*

ſix

ſix and forty years; he dyed in 1653. and ſtill lives in the memory of many here preſent.

I muſt confeſs that I am no friend to Funeral *Panegyricks*, where there is nothing of extraordinary worth and merit in the party commended to give occaſion and foundation for them: In ſuch caſes, as praiſes are not due to the dead, ſo they may be of ill conſequence to the living: not only by bringing thoſe of our Profeſſion that make a practice of it, under the ſuſpicion of officious and mercenary flattery, but likewiſe by encouraging men to hope that they alſo may be well ſpoken of, and even Sainted when they are dead, though they ſhould have done little or no good in their life: But yet on the other hand, to commend thoſe excellent Perſons the vertues of whoſe lives have been bright and exemplary, is not only a piece of juſtice due to the dead, but an act of great charity to the living, ſetting a pattern of well-doing before our eyes, very apt and powerful to incite and encourage us *to go and do likewiſe.*

Upon both theſe Conſiderations, firſt to do right to the memory of ſo good a man, and then in hopes that the example may

may prove fruitful and have a conſiderable effect upon others to beget the like goodneſs and charity in them, I ſhall endeavour, in as narrow a compaſs as may be, to give you the juſt character of this truly pious and charitable Man, and by ſetting his life in a true light to recommend with all the advantage I can ſo excellent a pattern to your imitation.

He was born at *Bow* near *Stratford* in the County of *Middleſex* the 19th. day of *September* 1605. He was bred at *Eaton* School, and from thence choſen to *King*'s College in *Cambridge* being about 20 years of Age, in the year 1626. After he had finiſh'd the courſe of his ſtudies, and taken his Degrees, he left the *Univerſity* and his *Fellowſhip*, being preſented to the Living of *Colſden* near *Croyden* in *Surrey*, where he continued about 2 or 3 years; and from thence was remov'd to S. *Sepulchres* in *London*, in the year 1638. and the year after thinking fit to change his condition match'd into a very worthy and ancient Family, marrying one of the Daughters of Sir *Robert Darcy*.

Being thus ſettled in this large and populous *Pariſh*, he did with great ſolicitude and pains diſcharge all the parts of a vigi-

a vigilant and faithful Miniſter, for about the ſpace of 24 years. For beſides his conſtant and weekly labour of preaching, he was very diligent and charitable in viſiting the ſick, and miniſtring not only ſpiritual counſel and comfort to them, but likewiſe liberal relief to the wants and neceſſities of thoſe that were poor and deſtitute of means to help themſelves in that condition. He did alſo every morning throughout the year Catechiſe in the Church, eſpecially the poorer ſort who were generally moſt ignorant; and to encourage them to come thither to be inſtructed by him, he did once a week diſtribute money among them, not upon a certain day, but changing it on purpoſe as he thought good, that he might thereby oblige them to be conſtantly preſent; Theſe were chiefly the more aged poor, who being paſt labour had leaſure enough to attend upon this exerciſe. As for the other ſort of poor who were able to work for their living, he ſet them at work upon his own charge, buying Flax and Hemp for them to ſpin, and what they ſpun he took off their hands, paying them for their work, and then got it wrought into Cloth, and ſold it as he could, chiefly among his friends,

himſelf

himſelf bearing the whole loſs. And this was a very wiſe and well choſen way of charity, and in the good effect of it a much greater charity than if he had given theſe very perſons freely and for nothing ſo much as they earned by their work; becauſe by this means he took many off from begging, and thereby reſcued them at once from two of the moſt dangerous temptations of this world, *Idleneſs* and *Poverty*; and by degrees reclaim'd them to a vertuous and induſtrious courſe of life, which enabled them afterwards to live without being beholden to the charity of others.

And this courſe ſo happily devis'd and begun by Mr. *Gouge* in his own Pariſh, was I think that which gave the firſt hint to that worthy and uſefull Citizen Mr. *Thomas Firmin* of a much larger deſign, which hath been proſecuted by him for ſome years with that vigour and good ſucceſs in this City, that many hundreds of poor Children, and others who liv'd idle before, unprofitable both to themſelves and the publick, are continually maintain'd at work and taught to earn their own livelihood much in the ſame way: He being, by the generous aſſiſtance and charity of many worthy and well-

well-disposed Persons of all ranks, enabled to bear the unavoidable loss and charge of so vast an undertaking; and by his own forward inclination to charity, and his unwearied diligence and activity, extraordinarily fitted to sustain and go through the incredible pains of it.

But to return to our deceased Friend; concerning whom I must content my self to pass over many things worthy to be remembred of him, and to speak only of those Vertues of his which were more eminent and remarkable.

Of his Piety towards God, which is the necessary foundation of all other Graces and Vertues, I shall only say this, That it was great and exemplary, but yet very still and quiet, without stir and noise, and much more in substance and reality, than in shew and ostentation; and did not consist in censuring and finding fault with others, but in the due care and government of his own life and actions, and in *exercising* himself *continually to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men*; in which he was such a proficient, that even after a long acquaintance and familiar conversation with him, it was not easie to observe any thing that might deserve blame.

He

He particularly excell'd in the more peculiar vertues of converſation, in *modeſty*, *humility*, *meekneſs*, *cheerfulneſs*, and in *kindneſs* and *charity towards all men*.

So great was his *modeſty*, that it never appear'd either by word or action, that he put any value upon himſelf. This I have often obſerv'd in him, that the Charities which were procur'd chiefly by his application and induſtry, when he had occaſion to give an account of them, he would rather impute to any one who had but the leaſt hand and part in the obtaining of them, than aſſume any thing of it to himſelf. Another inſtance of his modeſty was, that when he had quitted his Living of S. *Sepulchres* upon ſome diſſatisfaction about the terms of conformity, he willingly forbore preaching, ſaying there was no need of him here in *London* where there were ſo many worthy Miniſters, and that he thought he might do as much or more good in another way which could give no offence. Only in the latter years of his life, being better ſatisfi'd in ſome things he had doubted of before, He had Licenſe from ſome of the Biſhops to preach in *Wales* in his progreſs; which he was the more willing to do, becauſe

becauſe in ſome places he ſaw great need of it, and he thought he might do it with greater advantage among the poor People, who were the more likely to regard his inſtructions, being recommended by his great charity ſo well known to them, and of which they had ſo long had the experience and benefit. But where there was no ſuch need, he was very well contented to hear others perſwade men to goodneſs and to practice it himſelf.

He was *clothed with humility*, and had in a moſt eminent degree that *ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which* S. *Peter* ſays, *is in the ſight of God of* ſo *great price*: So that there was not the leaſt appearance either of Pride or Paſſion in any of his words or actions. He was not only free from anger and bitterneſs, but from all affected gravity and moroſeneſs. His converſation was affable and pleaſant; he had a wonderfull ſerenity of mind and evenneſs of temper, viſible in his very countenance; he was hardly ever merry, but never melancholly and ſad; and for any thing I could diſcern, after a long and intimate acquaintance with him, he was upon all occaſions and accidents perpetually the ſame; always

cheerful,

cheerfull, and always kind; of a diſpoſition ready to embrace aud oblige all men; allowing others to differ from him, even in opinions that were very dear to him; and provided men did but *fear God and work righteouſneſs*, he lov'd them heartily, how diſtant ſoever from him in judgment about things leſs neceſſary; In all which he is very worthy to be a pattern to men of all Perſwaſions whatſoever.

But that Vertue which of all other ſhone brighteſt in him, and was his moſt proper and peculiar character, was his cheerfull and unwearied diligence in acts of pious Charity. In this he left far behind him all that ever I knew, and, as I ſaid before, had a ſingular ſagacity and prudence in deviſing the moſt effectual ways of doing good, and in managing and diſpoſing his charity to the beſt purpoſes, and to the greateſt extent; always, if it were poſſible, making it to ſerve ſome end of Piety and Religion; as the inſtruction of poor children in the principles of Religion, and furniſhing grown perſons that were ignorant with the *Bible* and other good Books; ſtrictly obliging thoſe to whom he gave them to a diligent reading of them, and when he had opportunity exacting of them an account how they had profited by them.

In his occasional alms to the poor, in which he was very free and bountiful, the relief he gave them was always mingled with good counsel, and as great a tenderness and compassion for their souls as bodies; which very often attain'd the good effect it was likely to have, the one making way for the other with so much advantage, and men being very apt to follow the good advice of those, who give them in hand so sensible a pledge and testimony of their good will to them.

This kind of charity must needs be very expensive to him, but he had a plentifull estate settled upon him and left him by his Father, and he laid it out as liberally in the most prudent and effectual ways of Charity he could think of, and upon such persons as, all circumstances considered, he judg'd to be the fittest and most proper objects of it.

For about nine or ten years last past he did, as is well known to many here present, almost wholly apply his charity to *Wales*, because there he judg'd was most occasion for it: And because this was a very great work, he did not only lay out upon it whatever he could spare out of his own estate, but employ'd his whole time

time and pains to excite and engage the charity of others for his assistance in it.

And in this he had two excellent designs. One, to have poor children brought up to reade and write, and to be carefully instructed in the principles of Religion: The other, to furnish persons of grown Age, the poor especially, with the necessary helps and means of knowledge, as the Bible, and other Books of piety and devotion, in their own Language; to which end he procur'd the *Church-Catechism*, the *Practice of Piety*, and that best of Books the *Whole duty of Man*, besides several other pious and useful *Treatises*, some of them to be translated into the *Welch* Tongue, and great numbers of all them to be printed, and sent down to the chief Towns in *Wales*, to be sold at easie rates to those that were able to buy them, and to be freely given to those that were not.

And in both these designs, through the blessing of God upon his unwearied endeavours, he found very great success. For by the large and bountifull contributions which chiefly by his industry and prudent application were obtain'd from charitable Persons of all Ranks and conditions, from the *Nobility* and *Gentry of*

Wales and the neighbouring *Counties*, and ſeveral of that Quality in and about *London*; from divers of the Right Reverend *Biſhops*, and of the Clergy; and from that perpetual fountain of charity the City of *London*, led on and encourag'd by the moſt bountifull example of the Right Honourable the *Lord Mayor* and the *Court of Aldermen*; to all which he conſtantly added two Thirds of his own eſtate, which as I have been credibly inform'd was two hundred pounds a year; I ſay, by all theſe together there were every year *eight hundred*, ſometimes a *thouſand* poor children educated as I ſaid before; and by this example ſeveral of the moſt conſiderable *Towns* of *Wales* were excited to bring up at their own charge the like number of poor children, in the like manner, and under his inſpection and care.

He likewiſe gave very great numbers of the Books above mention'd both in the *Welch* and *Engliſh* Tongues, to the poorer ſort, ſo many as were unable to buy them and willing to reade them. But which was the greateſt work of all, and amounted indeed to a mighty charge, he procured a new and very fair impreſſion of the Bible and Liturgy of the Church of

of *England* in the *Welch* Tongue (the former Impreſſion being ſpent, and hardly twenty of them to be had in all *London*) to the number of eight thouſand; one thouſand whereof were freely given to the poor, and the reſt ſent to the principal Cities and Towns in *Wales* to be ſold to the rich at very reaſonable and low rates, *viz.* at *four ſhillings* a piece well bound and claſped; which was much cheaper than any *Engliſh* Bible was ever ſold that was of ſo fair a print and paper: A work of that charge, that it was not likely to have been done any other way; And for which this Age, and perhaps the next, will have great cauſe to thank God on his behalf.

In theſe good works he employed all his time and care and pains, and his whole heart was in them; ſo that he was very little affected with any thing elſe, and ſeldom either minded or knew any thing of the ſtrange occurrences of this troubleſome and buſie Age, ſuch as I think are hardly to be parallel'd in any other. Or if he did mind them, he ſcarce ever ſpoke any thing about them. For this was the buſineſs he laid to heart, and knowing it to be ſo much and ſo certainly the Will of his heavenly Father, it was

his meat and drink to be doing of it: and the good ſucceſs he had in it was a continual feaſt to him, and gave him a perpetual ſerenity both of mind and countenance. His great love and zeal for this work made all the pains and difficulties of it ſeem nothing to him: He would riſe early and ſit up late, and continued the ſame diligence and induſtry to the laſt, though he was in the threeſcore and ſeventeenth year of his Age. And that he might manage the diſtribution of this great charity with his own hands, and ſee the good effect of it with his own eyes, he always once, but uſually twice a year, at his own charge travelled over a great part of *Wales*, none of the beſt Countries to travel in: But for the love of God and men he endured all that, together with the extremity of heat and cold (which in their ſeveral ſeaſons are both very great there) not only with patience but with pleaſure. So that all things conſidered there have not, ſince the primitive times of Chriſtianity, been many among the ſons of men to whom that glorious character of the Son God might be better applied, that *he went about doing good.* And *Wales* may as worthily boaſt of this truly Apoſtolical man

as

as of their famous St. *David*; who was alſo very probably a good man, as thoſe times of ignorance and ſuperſtition went. But his goodneſs is ſo diſguiſed by their fabulous *Legends* and ſtories which give us the account of him, that it is not eaſie to diſcover it. Indeed ridiculous miracles in abundance are reported of him: as, that upon occaſion of a great number of people reſorting from all parts to hear him preach, for the greater advantage of his being heard, a mountain all on a ſudden roſe up miraculouſly under his feet, and his voice was extended to that degree that he might be diſtinctly heard for two or three miles round about. Such phantaſtical miracles as theſe make up a great part of his Hiſtory. And admitting all theſe to be true (which a wiſe man would be loth to do) our departed Friend had that which is much greater and more excellent than all theſe, a fervent charity to God and men; which is more than to *ſpeak* (as they would make us believe St *David* did) *with the Tongue of men and Angels*, more than to raiſe or remove mountains.

And now methinks it is pity ſo good a deſign ſo happily proſecuted ſhould fall and die with this good man. And it is

now under deliberation, if poſſible, ſtill to continue and carry it on, and a very worthy and charitable perſon pitched upon for that purpoſe, who is willing to undertake that part which he that is gone performed ſo well: But this will depend upon the continuance of the former Charities and the concurrence of thoſe worthy and well-diſpoſed perſons in *Wales* to contribute their part as formerly; which I perſwade my ſelf they will cheerfully do.

I will add but one thing more concerning our deceaſed Brother, that though he meddled not at all in our preſent heats and differences as a Party, having much better things to mind; yet as a looker on he did very ſadly lament them, and for ſeveral of the laſt years of his life he continued in the Communion of our Church, and, as he himſelf told me, thought himſelf obliged in conſcience ſo to do.

He died in the 77th year of his age, *Octob.* 29th, 1681. It ſo pleaſed God that his death was very ſudden; and ſo ſudden, that in all probability he himſelf hardly preceived it when it happened, for he died in his ſleep; ſo that we may ſay of him as it is ſaid of *David, after he had*

ſerved

ſerved his generation according to the will of God he fell aſleep.

I confeſs that a ſudden death is generally undeſirable, and therefore with reaſon we pray againſt it; becauſe ſo very few are ſufficiently prepared for it: But to him the conſtant employment of whoſe life was the beſt preparation for death that was poſſible, no death could be ſudden; nay, it was rather a favour and bleſſing to him, becauſe by how much the more ſudden ſo much the more eaſie: As if God had deſigned to begin the reward of the great pains of his life in an eaſie death. And indeed it was rather a tranſlation than a death; and, ſaving that his body was left behind, what was ſaid of *Enoch* may not unfitly be applied to this pious and good man with reſpect to the ſuddenneſs of his change; *he walked with God, and was not, for God took him.*

And God grant that we who ſurvive, may all of us ſincerel endeavour to tread in the ſteps of his exemplary piety and charity; of his labour of love, his unwearied diligence and patient continuance in doing good, that we may meet with that encouraging commendation which he hath already received from the mouth of

of our Lord, *Well done good and faithfull ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you always that which is pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

A

SERMON

Preached at the

FUNERAL

Of the Reverend

BENJAMIN WHICHCOT, D. D.

May 24th, 1683.

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2 COR. V. 6.

Wherefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body we are abſent from the Lord.

THeſe Words contain one of the chief grounds of encouragement which the Chriſtian Religion gives us againſt the fear of death. For our clearer under-

underſtanding of them it will be requiſite to conſider the *Context*, looking back as far as the beginning of the *Chapter*; where the *Apoſtle* purſues the argument of the foregoing *Chapter*; which was to comfort and encourage Chriſtians under their afflictions and ſufferings from this conſideration, that theſe did but prepare the way for a greater and more glorious reward; *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* And ſuppoſe the worſt, that theſe ſufferings ſhould extend to death, there is comfort for us likewiſe in this caſe, *ver.* 1. of this *Chapter*, *For we know that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God*, &c. *If our earthly houſe of this tabernacle*; he calls our body an *earthly houſe*, and that we may not look upon it as a certain abode and fixed habitation, he doth by way of correction of himſelf add, that it is but a *tabernacle* or tent which muſt ſhortly be taken down: And when it is, *we ſhall have a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* This is a deſcription of our heavenly habitation, in oppoſition to our earthly houſe or tabernacle: It is *a building of God*, not like

like thoſe houſes or tabernacles which men build, and which are liable to decay and diſſolution, to be taken down or to fall down of themſelves, for ſuch are thoſe houſes of clay which we dwell in *whoſe foundations are in the duſt*, but an habitation prepared by God himſelf, *a houſe not made with hands*; that which is the immediate work of God being in Scripture oppoſed to that which is made with hands and effected by humane concurrence and by natural means: And being the immediate work of God, as it is excellent, ſo it is laſting and durable, which no earthly thing is; *eternal in the heavens*, that is eternal and heavenly.

For in this we groan earneſtly; that is, while we are in this body we groan by reaſon of the preſſures and afflictions of it. *Deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe which is from heaven: If ſo be that being clothed we ſhall not be found naked. Deſiring to be clothed upon*; that is, we could wiſh not to put off theſe bodies, not to be ſtrip'd of them by death, but to be of the number of thoſe who at the coming of our Lord without the putting off theſe bodies ſhall be changed and clothed upon with their houſe which is from heaven, and without dying be inveſted with

with thoſe ſpiritual and glorious and heavenly bodies which men ſhall have at the Reſurrection.

This I doubt not is the *Apoſtle*'s meaning in theſe Words; in which he ſpeaks according to a common opinion among the Diſciples grounded (as St. *John* tells us) upon a miſtake of our Saviour's words concerning him, *If I will that he tarry till I come:* upon which St. *John* tells us that *there went a Saying among the brethren that that diſciple ſhould not die*; that is, that he ſhould live till Chriſt's coming to Judgment, and then be changed; and conſequently that Chriſt would come to Judgment before the end of that Age. Suitable to this common opinion among Chriſtians the *Apoſtle* here ſays, *in this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe which is from heaven, if ſo be that being clothed we ſhall not be found naked.* It hath puzzled *Interpreters* what to make of this paſſage, and well it might; for whatever be meant by being clothed, how can they that are clothed be found naked? But I think it is very clear that our *Tranſlatours* have not attained the true ſence of this paſſage; Εἴγε καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι, οὐ γυμνοὶ, εὑρεθησόμεθα; which is moſt naturally ren-

rendred thus, *if ſo be we ſhall be found clothed, and not naked:* That is, if the coming of Chriſt ſhall find us in the body and not deveſted of it; if at Chriſt's coming to judgment we ſhall be found alive, and not dead. And then the ſenſe of the whole is very clear and current; we are deſirous to be clothed upon with our houſe from heaven (that is, with our ſpiritual and immortal bodies) if ſo be it ſhall ſo happen that at the coming of Chriſt we ſhall be found alive in theſe bodies, and not ſtripp'd of them before by death. And then it follows, *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burthened* (that is, with the afflictions and preſſures of this life) *not that we would be unclothed* (that is, not that we deſire by death to be deveſted of theſe bodies) *but clothed upon* (that is, if God ſee it good we had rather be found alive, and changed, and without putting off theſe bodies have immortality as it were ſuperinduced) *that ſo mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.* The plain ſenſe is, that he rather deſires (if it may be) to be of the number of thoſe who ſhall be found alive at the coming of Chriſt, and have this mortal and corruptible body while they are clothed with it changed into a ſpititual and incorruptible body, without

without the pain and terrour of dying: of which immediate tranſlation into heaven without the painfull divorce of ſoul and body by death, *Enoch* and *Elias* were examples in the old Teſtament.

It follows, *ver.* 5. *Now he that hath wrought for us the ſelf ſame thing is* God: That is, it is he who hath fitted and prepared us for this Glorious change: *who alſo hath given us the earneſt of the Spirit.* The Spirit is frequently in Scripture called the *witneſs* and *ſeal* and *earneſt* of our future happineſs and bleſſed Reſurrection or change of this vile and earthly bodies into ſpiritual and heavenly bodies. For as the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead by the power of the holy Ghoſt is the great proof and evidence of immortality; ſo the ſpirit of him that raiſed up *Jeſus* from the dead dwelling in us is the pledge and earneſt of our Reſurrection to an immortal life.

From all which the *Apoſtle* concludes in the words of the *Text*, *Therefore we are always confident*, that is, we are always of good courage againſt the fear of death, *knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body we are abſent from the Lord*, ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι, which may better be rendred *whilſt we converſe* or *ſojourn in the body*, than *whilſt we are at home*;

home; Becauſe the deſign of the *Apoſtle* is to ſhew that the body is not our houſe but our tabernacle; and that whilſt we are in the body we are not at home, but pilgrims and ſtrangers. And this notion the *Heathens* had of our preſent life and condition in this world. *Ex vita diſcedo* (ſaith *Tully*) *tanquam ex hoſpitio non tanquam ex domo; commorandi enim natura diverſorium nobis, non habitandi locum dedit. We go out of this life as it were from an Inn, and not from our home; nature having deſigned it to us as a place to ſojourn but not to dwell in.*

We are abſent from the Lord; that is, we are detained from the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of God, and kept out of the poſſeſſion of that happineſs which makes Heaven.

So that the *Apoſtle* makes an immediate oppoſition between our continuance in the body, and our bliſsfull enjoyment of God; and lays it down for a certain truth, that whilſt we remain in the body we are detained from our happineſs, and that ſo ſoon as ever we leave the body we ſhall be admitted into it, *knowing that whilſt we converſe in the body we are abſent from the Lord.* And *ver.* 8. *we are willing rather to be abſent from the body*

and present with the Lord; intimating that so soon as we quit these bodies we shall be admitted to the blessed sight and enjoyment of God.

My design from this *Text* is to draw some useful *Corollaries* or Conclusions from this Assertion of the *Apostle*, *That whilst we are in these bodies we are detained from our happiness*; *and that so soon as ever we depart out of them we shall be admitted to the possession and enjoyment of it.* And they are these,

1. This Assertion shews us the vanity and falshood of that Opinion, or rather dream, concerning the sleep of the Soul from the time of death till the general Resurrection. This is chiefly grounded upon that frequent Metaphor in Scripture by which death is resembled to sleep, and those that are dead are said to be fallen asleep. But this Metaphor is no where in Scripture, that I know of, applied to the soul but to the body resting in the grave in order to its being awakened and raised up at the Resurrection. And thus it is frequently used with express reference to the body, *Dan.* 12. 2. *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth*

earth ſhall awake. Matth. 27. 52. *And the graves were opened, and many bodies of ſaints which ſlept aroſe.* Acts 13. 36. *David after he had ſerved his own generation by the will of God fell on ſleep, and was laid to his fathers and ſaw corruption*; which ſurely can no otherwiſe be underſtood than of his body. 1 *Cor.* 15. 21. *Now is Chriſt riſen from the dead and become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*: that is, the reſurrection of his body is the earneſt and aſſurance that ours alſo ſhall be raiſed. And *ver.* 51. *We ſhall not all ſleep, but ſhall all be changed*; where the *Apoſtle* certainly ſpeaks both of the death and change of theſe corruptible bodies. 1 *Theſſal.* 4. 14. *If we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them alſo that ſleep in Jeſus ſhall God bring with him*; That is, the bodies of thoſe that died in the Lord ſhall be raiſed, and accompany him at his coming. So that it is the body which is ſaid in Scripture to ſleep, and not the ſoul. For that is utterly inconſiſtent with the *Apoſtle*'s Aſſertion here in the *Text*, that *while we are in the body we are abſent from the Lord*, and that ſo ſoon as we depart out of the body we ſhall be preſent with the Lord. For ſurely *to be with the Lord* muſt ſignifie a ſtate

of happineſs, which ſleep is not, but only of inactivity: Beſides, that the *Apoſtle*'s Argument would be very flat, and it would be but a cold encouragement againſt the fear of death, that ſo ſoon as we are dead we ſhall fall aſleep and become inſenſible. But the *Apoſtle* uſeth it as an Argument why we ſhould be willing to dye as ſoon as God pleaſeth, and the ſooner the better, becauſe ſo ſoon as we quit theſe bodies we ſhall be preſent with the Lord, that is, admitted to the bliſsfull ſight and enjoyment of him; and while we abide in the body we are detained from our happineſs: But if our ſouls ſhall ſleep as well as our bodies till the general Reſurrection, it is all one whether we continue in the body or not, as to any happineſs we ſhall enjoy in the mean time; which is directly contrary to the main ſcope of the *Apoſtle*'s Argument.

2. This Aſſertion of the *Apoſtle*'s doth perfectly conclude againſt the feigned Purgatory of the Church of *Rome*; which ſuppoſeth the far greater number of true and faithfull Chriſtians, of thoſe who dye in the Lord and have obtained eternal redemption by him from hell not to paſs imme-

immediately into a ſtate of happineſs, but to be detained in the ſuburbs of Hell in extremity of torment (equal to that of hell for degree, though not for duration) till their ſouls be purged, and the guilt of temporal puniſhments, which they are liable to, be ſome way or other paid off and diſcharged. They ſuppoſe indeed ſome very few holy perſons (eſpecially thoſe who ſuffer Martyrdom) to be ſo perfect at their departure out of the body as to paſs immediately into Heaven, becauſe they need no purgation: But moſt Chriſtians they ſuppoſe to dye ſo imperfect that they ſtand in need of being purged; and according to the degree of their imperfection are to be detain'd a ſhorter or a longer time in Purgatory.

But now, beſides that there is no *Text* in *Scripture* from whence any ſuch ſtate can probably be concluded (as is acknowledged by many learned men of the Church of *Rome*) and even that *Text* which they have moſt inſiſted upon (*they ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire*) is given up by them as inſufficient to conclude the thing. *Eſtius* is very glad to get off it, by ſaying there is nothing in it againſt Purgatory: Why? no body pretends that, but we might reaſonably

expect that there ſhould be ſomething for it in a *Text* which hath been ſo often produced and urged by them for the proof of it. I ſay, beſides that there is nothing in Scripture for Purgatory, there are a great many things againſt it, and utterly inconſiſtent with it. In the parable of the *Rich man* and *Lazarus*, which was deſigned to repreſent to us the different ſtates of good and bad men in another world, there is not the leaſt intimation of Purgatory, but that good men paſs immediately into a ſtate of happineſs, and bad men into a place of torment. And St. *John*, *Rev.* 14. 13. pronounceth all that dye in the Lord happy, becauſe *they reſt from their labours*; which they cannot be ſaid to do who are in a ſtate of great anguiſh and torment, as thoſe are ſuppoſed to be who are in Purgatory.

But above all, this Reaſoning of Saint *Paul* is utterly inconſiſtent with any imagination of ſuch a ſtate. For he encourageth all Chriſtians in general againſt the fear of death from the conſideration of that happy ſtate they ſhould immediately paſs into, by being admitted into the preſence of God; which ſurely is not Purgatory. *We are of good courage* (ſays he) *and willing rather to be abſent from the*

the body: And great reaſon we ſhould be ſo, if ſo ſoon as we leave the body we are preſent with the Lord. But no man ſure would be glad to leave the body to go into a place of exquiſite and extreme torment, which they tell us is the caſe of moſt Chriſtians when they dye. And what can be more unreaſonable, than to make the *Apoſtle* to uſe an argument to comfort all Chriſtians againſt the fear of death which concerns but very few in compariſon? So that if the *Apoſtle*'s reaſoning be good, that while we are in this life we are detained from our happineſs, and ſo ſoon as we depart this life we paſs immediately into it, and therefore death is deſirable to all good men: I ſay, if this reaſoning be good, it is very clear that Saint *Paul* knew nothing of the Doctrine now taught in the Church of *Rome* concerning Purgatory; becauſe that is utterly inconſiſtent with what he expreſly aſſerts in this *Chapter*; and quite takes away the force of his whole Argument.

3. To encourage us againſt the fear of death. And this is the Concluſion which the *Apoſtle* makes from this conſideration. *Therefore* (ſays he) *we are of good courage, knowing that whilſt we converſe in the*

body we are abſent from the Lord. There is in us a natural love of life, and a natural horrour and dread of death; ſo that our ſpirits are apt to ſhrink at the thoughts of the approach of it. But this fear may very much be mitigated and even overruled by Reaſon and the conſiderations of Religion. For death is not ſo dreadful in it ſelf, as with regard to the conſequences of it: And thoſe will be as we are, comfortable and happy to the good, but diſmal and miſerable to the wicked. So that the only true antidote againſt the fear of death is the hopes of a better life; and the only firm ground of theſe hopes is the mercy of God in *Jeſus Chriſt*, upon our due preparation for another world by repentance and a holy life. For the ſting of death is ſin; and when that is taken away the terrour and bitterneſs of death is paſt: And then death is ſo far from being dreadful, that in reaſon it is extremely deſirable; becauſe it lets us into a better ſtate, ſuch as only deſerves the name of life. *Hi vivunt qui ex corporum vinculis tanquam è carcere evolaverunt: veſtra vero quæ dicitur vita, mors eſt.* *They truly live* (could a *Heathen* ſay) *who have made their eſcape out of this priſon of the body; but that which men commonly*

commonly call life is rather death than life. To live indeed, is to be well, and to be happy; and that we ſhall never be till we are got beyond the grave.

4. This Conſideration ſhould comfort us under the loſs and death of Friends, which certainly is one of the greateſt grievances and troubles of humane life. For if they be fit for God, and go to him when they die, they are infinitely happier than it was poſſible for them to have been in this world; and the trouble of their abſence from us is fully balanced by their being preſent with the Lord. For why ſhould we lament the end of that life which we are aſſured is the beginning of immortality? One reaſon of our trouble for the loſs of Friends is becauſe we loved them: But it is no ſign of our love to them to grudge and repine at their happineſs. But we hoped to have enjoyed them longer: Be it ſo; yet why ſhould we be troubled that they are happy ſooner than we expected? But they are parted from us, and the thought of this is grievous: But yet the conſideration of their being parted for a while is not near ſo ſad, as the hopes of a happy meeting again, never to be parted any more,

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is comfortable and joyful. So that the greater our love to them was, the leſs ſhould be our grief for them, when we conſider that they are happy, and that they are ſafe; paſt all ſtorms, all the troubles and temptations of this life, and out of the reach of all harm and danger for ever. But though the Reaſon of our duty in this caſe be very plain, yet the practice of it is very difficult; and when all is ſaid, natural affection will have its courſe: And even after our Judgment is ſatisfied, it will require ſome time to ſtill and quiet our Paſſions.

5. This Conſideration ſhould wean us from the love of life; and make us not only contented, but willing and glad to leave this world, whenever it ſhall pleaſe God to call us out of it. This Inference the *Apoſtle* makes, *ver.* 8. *We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord.* Though there were no ſtate of immortality after this life, yet methinks we ſhould not deſire to live always in this world. *Habet natura* (ſays *Tully*) *ut aliarum rerum, ſic vivendi modum: As nature hath ſet bounds and meaſures to other things, ſo likewiſe to life*; of which men ſhould

ſhould know when they have enough, and not covet ſo much of it till they be tyred and cloyed with it. If there were no other inconvenience in long life, this is a great one, that in a long courſe of time we unavoidably ſee a great many things which we would not; our own misfortunes and the calamities of others; publick confuſions and diſtractions; the loſs of Friends and Relations; or which is worſe, their miſery; or which is worſt of all, their miſcarriage: Eſpecially, a very infirm and tedious old age is very undeſirable: For who would deſire to live long uneaſie to himſelf, and troubleſome to others? It is time for us to be willing to dye, when we cannot live with the good will even of our friends: when thoſe who ought to love us beſt think much that we live ſo long, and can hardly forbear to give us broad ſigns that they are weary of our company. In ſuch a caſe a man would almoſt be contented to dye out of civility; and not chuſe to make any long ſtay where he ſees that his company is not acceptable. If we think we can be welcome to a better place, and to a more delightful ſociety, why ſhould we deſire to thruſt our ſelves any longer upon an ill-natured world,

upon

upon thoſe who have much adoe to refrain from telling us that our room is better than our company?

Some indeed have a very happy and vigorous old age, and the taper of life burns clear in them to the laſt: Their underſtandings are good, their memories and ſenſes tolerable, their humour pleaſant and their converſation acceptable, and their Relations kind and reſpectful to them. But this is a rare felicity, and which ſeldome happens but to thoſe who have lived wiſely and vertuouſly, and by a religious and regular courſe of life have preſerved ſome of their beſt ſpirits to the laſt, and have not by vice and extravagance drawn off life to the dregs, and left nothing to be enjoyed but infirmities and ill humours, guilt and repentance: But on the contrary have prudently laid up ſome conſiderable comforts and ſupports for themſelves againſt this gloomy day; having ſtored their minds with wiſdom and knowledge, and taken care to ſecure to themſelves the comfortable reflections of an uſeful and well-ſpent life, and the favour and loving-kindneſs of God which is better than life it ſelf. But generally the extremities of old age are very peeviſh and querulous, and a declining and falling

falling back to the weak and helpleſs condition of Infancy and Childhood. And yet leſs care is commonly taken to pleaſe aged perſons, and leſs kindneſs ſhewed to them (unleſs it be in expectation of receiving greater from them) than to Children: becauſe they are cheriſhed in hopes, the others in deſpair of their growing better. So that if God ſee it good it is not deſirable to live to try nature, and the kindneſs and good will of our Relations to the utmoſt.

Nay there is reaſon enough why we ſhould be well contented to dye in any Age of our life. If we are young, we have taſted the beſt of it: If in our middle Age, we have not only enjoyed all that is deſirable of life, but almoſt all that is tolerable: If we are old, we are come to the dregs of it, and do but ſee the ſame things over and over again, and continually with leſs pleaſure.

Eſpecially if we conſider the happineſs from which we are all this while detained. This life is but our Infancy and childhood in compariſon of the manly pleaſures and employments of the other ſtate. And why ſhould we deſire to be always children; and to linger here below to play the fools yet a little longer? In this

this ſenſe that high expreſſion of the *Poet* is true.

— Dii celant homines, ut vivere durent,
Quàm ſit dulce mori——

The Gods conceal from men the ſweetneſs of dying, to make them patient and contented to live.

This life is wholly in order to the other. Do but make ſure to live well, and there is no need of living long. To the purpoſe of preparation for another world, the beſt life is the longeſt. Some live a great pace, and by continual diligence and induſtry in ſerving God and doing good, do really diſpatch more of the buſineſs of life in a few years, than others do in a whole Age; who go ſuch a fantring pace towards Heaven, as if they were in no haſte to get thither. But if we were always prepared we ſhould rejoyce at the proſpect of our end; as thoſe who have been long toſt at Sea are overjoyed at the ſight of Land.

I have now done with my *Text*, but have another Subject to ſpeak of; that excellent Man in whoſe Place I now ſtand;

ſtand; whom we all knew, and whom all that knew him well did highly eſteem and reverence. He was born in *Shropſhire* of a worthy and ancient Family, the 11*th* of *March*, 1609. was the ſixth Son of his Father: and being bred up to learning, and very capable of it, was ſent to the Univerſity of *Cambridge*, and planted there in *Emanuel* College, where he was choſen Fellow, and was an excellent Tutour and Inſtructour of Youth, and bred up many perſons of great Quality, and others, who afterwards proved uſeful and eminent; as many perhaps as any Tutour of that Time.

About the age of four or five and thirty he was made Provoſt of *King*'s College; where he was a moſt vigilant and prudent Governour, a great encourager of Learning and good Order, and by his careful and wiſe management of the Eſtate of the College, brought it into a very flouriſhing Condition, and left it ſo.

It cannot be denied (nor am I much concerned to diſſemble it) that here he poſſeſs'd another man's place, who by the iniquity of the Times was wrongfully ejected; I mean Dr. *Collins* the famous and learned Divinity-Profeſſor of that Univerſity.

Univerſity. During whoſe Life (and he lived many years after) by the free conſent of the College there were two ſhares out of the common Dividend allotted to the Prevoſt, one whereof was conſtantly paid to Dr. *Collins*, as if he had been ſtill Prevoſt. To this Dr. *Whichcot* did not only give his conſent (without which the thing could not have been done) but was very forward for the doing of it, tho' hereby he did not only conſiderably leſſen his own profit, but likewiſe incur no ſmall cenſure and hazard, as the Times then were. And leſt this had not been kindneſs enough to that worthy Perſon whoſe Place he poſſeſſed, in his laſt Will he left to his Son, Sir *John Collins*, a Legacy of one hundred pounds.

And as he was not wanting either in reſpect or real kindneſs to the rightful Owner, ſo neither did he ſtoop to do any thing unworthy to obtain that Place; for he never took the *Covenant*: And not only ſo, but by the particular friendſhip and intereſt which he had in ſome of the chief of the *Viſitors*, he prevailed to have the greateſt part of the Fellows of that College exempted from that Impoſition; and preſerved them in their Places by that means. And to the

Fellows

Fellows that were ejected by the *Viſitors*, he likewiſe freely conſented that their full dividend for that year ſhould be paid them, even after they were ejected. Among theſe was the Reverend and ingenious Dr. *Charles Maſon*; upon whom after he was ejected, the College did confer a good Living which then fell in their gift, with the conſent of the Prevoſt, who, knowing him to be a worthy man, was contented to run the hazard of the diſpleaſure of thoſe Times.

So that I hope none will be hard upon him, that he was contented upon ſuch terms to be in a capacity to doe good in bad Times.

For, beſides his care of the College, he had a very great and good influence upon the Univerſity in general. Every Lord's day in the Afternoon, for almoſt twenty years together, he preached in *Trinity* Church, where he had a great number not only of the young Scholars, but of thoſe of greater ſtanding and beſt repute for Learning in the Univerſity his conſtant and attentive Auditors: And in thoſe wild and unſettled Times contributed more to the forming of the Students of that Univerſity to a ſober ſenſe of Religion than any man in that Age.

After he left *Cambridge* he came to *London*, and was choſen Miniſter of *Black-Friars*, where he continued till the dreadfull Fire; and then retired himſelf to a Donative he had at *Milton* near *Cambridge*; where he preached conſtantly, and relieved the poor, and had their Children taught to reade at his own charge; and made up differences among the Neighbours. Here he ſtayed till, by the promotion of the Reverend Dr. *Wilkins*, his Predeceſſor in this place, to the Biſhoprick of *Cheſter*, he was by his intereſt and recommendation preſented to this Church. But during the building of it, upon the invitation of the Court of Aldermen, in the Mayoralty of Sir *William Turner*, he preached before that Honourable Auditory at *Guild-Hall* Chapel every Sunday in the Afternoon with great acceptance and approbation, for about the ſpace of ſeven years.

When his Church was built, he beſtowed his pains here twice a week, where he had the general love and reſpect of his Pariſh; and a very conſiderable and judicious Auditory, though not very numerous by reaſon of the weakneſs of his voice in his declining age.

It pleaſed God to bleſs him, as with a plen-

plentifull Eſtate, ſo with a charitable Mind: which yet was not ſo well known to many, becauſe in the diſpoſal of his charity he very much affected ſecrecy. He frequently beſtowed his Alms (as I am informed by thoſe who beſt knew) on poor houſe-keepers diſabled by age or ſickneſs to ſupport themſelves, thinking thoſe to be the moſt proper objects of it. He was rather frugal in expence upon himſelf, that ſo he might have wherewithall to relieve the neceſſities of others.

And he was not onely charitable in his life, but in a very bountifull manner at his death; bequeathing in pious and charitable Legacies to the value of a thouſand pounds. To the Library of the Univerſity of *Cambridge* fifty pounds: and of *King's College* one hundred pounds: and of *Emanuel* College twenty pounds: to which College he had been a conſiderable Benefactor before; having founded there ſeveral Scholarſhips to the value of a thouſand pounds, out of a Charity with the diſpoſal whereof he was entruſted, and which not without great difficulty and pains he at laſt recovered.

To the Poor of the ſeveral places where his Eſtate lay, and where he had been Miniſter he gave above one hundred pounds.

Among thoſe who had been his Servants, or were ſo at his death, he diſpoſed in Annuities and Legacies in money to the value of above three hundred pounds.

To other charitable uſes and among the poorer of his Relations, above three hundred pounds.

To every one of his Tenants he left a Legacy according to the proportion of the Eſtate they held, by way of remembrance of him: and to one of them that was gone much behind he remitted in his Will ſeventy pounds. And as became his great goodneſs, he was ever a remarkably kind Landlord, forgiving his Tenants, and always making abatements to them for hard years or any other accidental loſſes that happened to them.

I muſt not omit the wiſe proviſion he made in his Will to prevent Law-ſuits among the Legatees, by appointing two or three perſons of greateſt prudence and Authority among his Relations final Arbitrators of all differences that ſhould ariſe.

Having given this account of his laſt Will, I come now to the ſad part of all: ſad, I mean, to us, but happieſt to him. A little before *Eaſter* laſt he went down to *Cambridge*: where, upon taking a great Cold,

Cold, he fell into a diſtemper which in a few days put a period to his life. He died in the houſe of his ancient and moſt learned Friend, Dr. *Cudworth*, Maſter of *Chriſt's* College. During his ſickneſs he had a conſtant calmneſs and ſerenity of mind: and under all his bodily weakneſs poſſeſt his ſoul in great patience. After the Prayers for the Viſitation of the Sick (which he ſaid were excellent Prayers) had been uſed, he was put in mind of receiving the Sacrament; to which he anſwered, that he moſt readily embraced the propoſal: And after he had received it, ſaid to Dr. *Cudworth*, I heartily thank you for this moſt Chriſtian office: I thank you for putting me in mind of receiving this Sacrament: adding this pious ejaculation, *The Lord fulfill all his declarations and promiſes, and pardon all my weakneſſes and imperfections.* He diſclaimed all merit in himſelf; and declared that whatever he was, he was through the grace and goodneſs of God in *Jeſus Chriſt*. He expreſſed likewiſe great diſlike of the Principles of Separation; and ſaid *he was the more deſirous to receive the Sacrament that he might declare his full Communion with the Church of Chriſt all the world over.* He diſclaimed *Popery*, and, as things of

near affinity with it, or rather parts of it, *all ſuperſtition, and uſurpation upon the conſciences of men.*

He thanked God, *that he had no pain in his body, nor diſquiet in his mind.*

Towards his laſt he ſeemed rather unwilling to be detained any longer in this ſtate; not for any pains he felt in himſelf, but for the trouble he gave his Friends: ſaying to one of them who had with great care attended him all along in his ſickneſs, *My dear Friend, thou haſt taken a great deal of pains to uphold a crazy body, but it will not do: I pray thee give me no more Cordials; for why ſhouldſt thou keep me any longer out of that happy ſtate to which I am going. I thank God I hope in his mercy, that it ſhall be well with me.*

And herein God was pleaſed particularly to anſwer thoſe devout and well-weighed petitions of his which he frequently uſed in his Prayer before Sermon, which I ſhall ſet down in his own words, & I doubt not thoſe that were his conſtant hearers do well remember them; *And ſuperadd this, O Lord, to all the grace and favour which thou haſt ſhewn us all along in life, not to remove us hence but with all advantage for Eternity, when we ſhall be in a due preparation of mind, in a holy conſti-*

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tution of ſoul, in a perfect renunciation of the guiſe of this mad and ſinfull world, when we ſhall be intirely reſigned up to thee, when we ſhall have clear acts af faith in God by Jeſus Chriſt, high and reverential thoughts of thee in our minds, inlarged and inflamed affections towards thee, &c. *And whenſoever we ſhall come to leave this world, which will be when thou ſhalt appoint (for the iſſues of life and death are in thy hands) afford us ſuch a mighty power and preſence of thy good Spirit that we may have ſolid conſolation in believing, and avoid all conſternation of mind, all doubtfulneſs and uncertainty concerning our everlaſting condition, and at length depart in the faith of Go'ds Elect,* &c. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.

Thus you have the ſhort Hiſtory of the life and death of this eminent Perſon; whoſe juſt Character cannot be given in few words, and time will not allow me to uſe many. To be able to deſcribe him aright it were neceſſary one ſhould be like him; for which reaſon I muſt content my ſelf with a very imperfect draught of him.

I ſhall not inſiſt upon his exemplary piety and devotion towards God, of which

his whole life was one continued Teſtimony. Nor will I praiſe his profound Learning, for which he was juſtly had in ſo great reputation. The moral improvements of his mind, *a God-like temper and diſpoſition* (as he was wont to call it) he chiefly valued and aſpired after; that univerſal charity and goodneſs, which he did continually preach and practiſe.

his Converſation was exceeding kind and affable, grave and winning, prudent and profitable. He was ſlow to declare his judgment, and modeſt in delivering it. Never paſſionate, never peremptory: ſo far from impoſing upon others, that he was rather apt to yeild. And though he had a moſt profound and well-poized judgment, yet was he of all men I ever knew the moſt patient to hear others differ from him, and the moſt eaſie to be convinced when good Reaſon was offered; and, which is ſeldom ſeen, more apt to be favourable to another man's Reaſon than his own.

Studious and inquiſitive men commonly at ſuch an age (at forty or fifty at the utmoſt) have fixed and ſetled their judgments in moſt Points, and as it were made their *laſt underſtanding*; ſuppoſing they have thought, or read, or heard what

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can be ſaid on all ſides of things; and after that, they grow poſitive and impatient of contradiction, thinking it a diſparagement to them to alter their judgment: But our deceaſed Friend was ſo wiſe, as to be willing to learn to the laſt; knowing that no man can grow wiſer without ſome change of his mind, without gaining ſome knowledge which he had not, or correcting ſome errour which he had before.

He had attained ſo perfect a maſtery of his paſſions, that for the latter and greateſt part of his life he was hardly ever ſeen to be tranſported with Anger: and as he was extremely carefull not to provoke any man, ſo not to be provoked by any; uſing to ſay, *if I provoke a man he is the worſe for my company, and if I ſuffer my ſelf to be provoked by him I ſhall be the worſe for his.*

He very ſeldom reproved any perſon in company otherwiſe than by ſilence, or ſome ſign of uneaſineſs, or ſome very ſoft and gentle word; which yet from the reſpect men generally bore to him did often prove effectual: For he underſtood humane nature very well, and how to apply himſelf to it in the moſt eaſie and effectual ways.

He was a great encourager and kind directour of young Divines: and one of the

the moſt candid hearers of Sermons, I think, that ever was: So that though all men did mightily reverence his Judgment, yet no man had reaſon to fear his Cenſure. He never ſpake well of himſelf, nor ill of others: making good that ſaying of *Panſa* in *Tully*, *neminem alterius, qui ſuæ conſideret virtuti, invidere*; that *no man is apt to envy the worth and vertues of another, that hath any of his own to truſt to.*

In a word, he had all thoſe vertues, and in a high degree, which an excellent temper, great conſideration, long care and watchfulneſs over himſelf, together with the aſſiſtance of God's grace (which he continually implored, and mightily relied upon) are apt to produce. Particularly he excelled in the vertues of Converſation, humanity, and gentleneſs, and humility, a prudent and peaceable and reconciling temper. And God knows we could very ill at this time have ſpared ſuch a Man; and have loſt from among us as it were ſo much balm for the healing of the Nation, which is now ſo miſerably rent and torn by thoſe wounds which we madly give our ſelves. But ſince God hath thought good to deprive us of him, let his vertues live in our memory, and his example in our lives. Let us endeavour to be what he

he was, and we ſhall one day be what he now is, of bleſſed memory on Earth, and happy for ever in Heaven.

And now methinks the conſideration of the Argument I have been upon, and of that great Example that is before us, ſhould raiſe our minds above this world and fix them upon the glory and happineſs of the other. Let us then begin heaven here, in the frame and temper of our minds, in our heavenly affections and converſation; in a due preparation for, and in earneſt deſires and breathings after that bleſſed ſtate which we firmly believe and aſſuredly hope to be one day poſſeſſed of: when we ſhall be removed out of this ſink of ſin and ſorrows into the Regions of bliſs and immortality: where we ſhall meet all thoſe worthy and excellent perſons who are gone before us, and whoſe converſation was ſo delightful to us in this world; and will be much more ſo to us in the other, when the Spirts of juſt men ſhall be made perfect, and ſhall be quit of all thoſe infirmities which did attend and leſſen them in this mortal ſtate; when we ſhall meet again with our dear Brother, and all thoſe good men whom we knew in this world, and with the Saints and excellent

cellent perſons of all Ages to enjoy their bleſſed friendſhip and ſociety for ever, in the preſence of the bleſſed God where is *fullneſs of joy, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore.*

In a firm perſuaſion of this happy ſtate let us every one of us ſay with *David*, and with the ſame ardency of affection that he did, *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God; My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God; O when ſhall I come and appear before God*; that ſo the life which we now live in this world may be *a patient continuance in well-doing* in a joyfull *expectation of the bleſſed hope and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt be all honour and glory, now and for ever.

Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will; working in us always that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

A

PERSUASIVE TO Frequent Communion.

1 COR. XI. 26, 27, 28.

For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

MY design in this Argument is, from the consideration of the Nature of this Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, and of the perpetual Use of it to the end

end of the world, to awaken men to a ſenſe of their duty, and the great obligation which lies upon them to the more frequent receiving of it. And there is the greater need to make men ſenſible of their duty in this particular, becauſe in this laſt Age by the unwary diſcourſes of ſome concerning the nature of this Sacrament and the danger of receiving it unworthily, ſuch doubts and fears have been raiſed in the minds of men as utterly ~~do deter~~ many, and in a great meaſure to diſcourage almoſt the generality of Chriſtians from the uſe of it; to the great prejudice and danger of mens ſouls, and the viſible abatement of Piety by the groſs neglect of ſo excellent a means of our growth and improvement in it; and to the mighty Scandal of our Religion, by the general diſuſe and contempt of ſo plain and ſolemn an Inſtitution of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour.

Therefore I ſhall take occaſion as briefly and clearly as I can to treat of theſe *four* Points.

Firſt, Of the *Perpetuity* of this Inſtitution; this the Apoſtle ſignifies when he ſaith, that *by eating this Bread, and drinking this Cup, we do ſhew the Lord's Death till he come.*

Secondly

Secondly, Of the *Obligation* that lies upon all Christians to a frequent observance of this Institution; this is signified in that expression of the Apostle, *as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup*: which expression considered and compared together with the practice of the Primitive Church, does imply an Obligation upon Christians to the frequent receiving of this Sacrament.

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to satisfie the *Objections* and Scruples which have been raised in the minds of men, and particularly of many devout and sincere Christians, to their great discouragement from their receiving this Sacrament, at least so frequently as they ought: which Objections are chiefly grounded upon what the Apostle says, *Wherefore whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the Body and Bloud of the Lord:* and *doth eat and drink damnation to himself.*

Fourthly, What *Preparation* of our selves is necessary in order to our worthy receiving of this Sacrament: which will give me occasion to explain the Apostle's meaning in those Words, *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

I. For

I. I. For the *Perpetuity* of this Inſtitution, implied in thoſe Words, *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's Death till he come*; or the Words may be read *imperatively* and by way of Precept, *ſhew ye forth the Lord's Death till he come.* In the three *verſes* immediately before, the Apoſtle particularly declares the Inſtitution of this Sacrament, with the manner and circumſtances of it, as he had received it not only by the hands of the Apoſtles, but, as the words ſeem rather to intimate, by immediate Revelation from our Lord himſelf, *ver.* 23. *For I have received of the Lord that which I alſo delivered unto you: that the Lord Jeſus in the ſame night that he was betrayed took Bread, and when he had given Thanks he brake it, and ſaid, take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the ſame manner alſo he took the Cup when he had ſupped, ſaying, this Cup is the New Teſtament in my Bloud: this doe as often as ye ſhall drink it in remembrance of me.* So that the Inſtitution is in theſe Words, *this doe in remembrance of me.* In which words our Lord commands his Diſciples after his Death to repeat theſe occaſions of *taking* and *breaking* and *eating the Bread,*

Bread, and of *drinking of the Cup*, by way of ſolemn Commemoration of him. Now whether this was to be done by them once only, or oftner; and whether by the Diſciples only, during their lives or by all Chriſtians afterwards in all ſucceſſive Ages of the Church, is not ſo certain merely from the force of theſe Words, *doe this in remembrance of me:* but what the Apoſtle adds puts the matter out of all doubt, that the Inſtitution of this Sacrament was intended not only for the Apoſtles, and for that Age, but for all Chriſtians, and for all Ages of the Chriſtian Church; *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's Death till he come:* that is, until the time of his ſecond coming, which will be at the end of the world. So that this Sacrament was deſigned to be a ſtanding Commemoration of the Death and Paſſion of our Lord till he ſhould come to Judgment; and conſequently the Obligation that lies upon Chriſtians to the obſervation of it is perpetual, and ſhall never ceaſe to the end of the world.

So that it is a vain conceit and mere dream of the *Enthuſiaſts* concerning the *ſeculum Spiritûs Sancti*, *the Age* and diſpenſation *of the Holy Ghoſt*, when, as

they ſuppoſe, all humane Teaching ſhall ceaſe, and all external Ordinances and Inſtitutions in Religion ſhall vaniſh, and there ſhall be no farther uſe of them. Whereas it is very plain from the *New Teſtament* that Prayer, and outward Teaching, and the Uſe of the two Sacraments, were intended to continue among Chriſtians in all Ages. As for *Prayer*, (beſides our natural Obligation to this duty, if there were no revealed Religion) we are by our Saviour particularly exhorted to *watch and pray* with regard to the day of Judgment, and in conſideration of the uncertainty of the time when it ſhall be: And therefore this will always be a Duty incumbent upon Chriſtians till the day of Judgment, becauſe it is preſcribed as one of the beſt ways of Preparation for it. That *outward Teaching* likewiſe and *Baptiſm* were intended to be perpetual is no leſs plain, becauſe Chriſt hath expreſly promiſed to be with the Teachers of his Church in the uſe of theſe Ordinances to the end of the World, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. *Go and diſciple all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: and lo I am with you always to the end of the World.* Not only to the end

end of that particular Age, but to the end of the Gospel Age, and the consummation of all Ages, as the phrase clearly imports. And it is as plain from this *Text*, that the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* was intended for a perpetual Institution in the Christian Church, till the second coming of Christ, *viz.* his coming to Judgment: Because St. *Paul* tells us, that by these Sacramental Signs the Death of Christ is to be represented and commemorated till he comes. *Doe this in remembrance of me: For as oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

And if this be the End and Use of this Sacrament, to be a solemn remembrance of the Death and Sufferings of our Lord during his absence from us, that is, till his coming to Judgment, then this Sacrament will never be out of date till the second coming of our Lord. The consideration whereof should mightily strengthen and encourage our Faith in the hope of Eternal Life so often as we partake of this Sacrament: since our Lord hath left it to us as a memorial of himself till he come to translate his Church into Heaven, and as a sure pledge that he will come again at the end of the World and invest us

in that Glory which he is now gone before to prepare for us. So that as often as we approach the Table of the Lord, we ſhould comfort our ſelves with the thoughts of that bleſſed time when we ſhall eat and drink with him in his Kingdom, and ſhall be admitted to the great Feaſt of the Lamb, and to eternal Communion with God the Judge of all, and with our bleſſed and glorified Redeemer, and the holy Angels, and the Spirits of juſt men made perfect.

And the ſame conſideration ſhould likewiſe make us afraid to receive this Sacrament unworthily, without due preparation for it, and without worthy effects of it upon our Hearts and Lives. Becauſe of that dreadfull Sentence of condemnation which at the ſecond coming of our Lord ſhall be paſt upon thoſe, who by the profanation of this ſolemn Inſtitution trample under foot the Son of God, and contemn the bloud of the Covenant; that Covenant of Grace and Mercy which God hath ratified with Mankind by the Bloud of his Son. The Apoſtle tells us that *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily is guilty of the Body and Bloud of the Lord*, and *eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf.* This indeed is ſpoken of temporal Judgment (as I ſhall ſhew

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in the latter part of this Diſcourſe,) but the Apoſtle likewiſe ſuppoſeth, that if theſe temporal Judgments had not their effect to bring men to Repentance, but they ſtill perſiſted in the Profanation of this holy Sacrament, they ſhould at laſt *be condemned with the World.* For as he that partaketh worthily of this Sacrament confirms his intereſt in the promiſes of the Goſpel, and his Title to eternal Life; ſo he that receives this Sacrament unworthly, that is without due Reverence, and without fruits meet for it; nay, on the contrary, continues to live in ſin whilſt he commemorates the Death of Chriſt, *who gave himſelf for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, this man aggravates and ſeals his own Damnation, becauſe he is guilty of the Body and Bloud of Chriſt, not only by the contempt of it, but by renewing in ſome ſort the cauſe of his ſufferings, and as it were *crucifying to himſelf afreſh the Lord of life and glory, and putting him to an open ſhame.* And when the great Judge of the world ſhall appear and paſs final Sentence upon men, ſuch obſtinate and impenitent wretches as could not be wrought upon by the remembrance of the deareſt love of their dying Lord, nor be engaged

to leave their ſins by all the tyes and obligations of this holy Sacrament, ſhall have their portion with *Pilate* and *Judas*, with the *chief Prieſts* and *Souldiers*, who were the betrayers and murtherers of the Lord of life and glory; and ſhall be dealt withall as thoſe who are in ſome ſort *guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord*. Which ſevere threatning ought not to diſcourage men from the Sacrament, but to deter all thoſe from their ſins who think of engaging themſelves to God by ſo ſolemn and holy a Covenant. It is by no means a ſufficient Reaſon to make men to fly from the Sacrament, but certainly one of the moſt powerfull Arguments in the world to make men forſake their ſins; as I ſhall ſhew more fully under the *third* head of this Diſcourſe.

II. II. The *Obligation* that lies upon all Chriſtians to the frequent obſervance and practice of this Inſtitution. For though it be not neceſſarily implied in theſe Words, *as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup*; yet if we compare theſe Words of the *Apoſtle* with the uſage and practice of Chriſtians at that time, which was to communicate in this holy Sacrament ſo often as they ſolemnly met together

ther to worſhip God, they plainly ſuppoſe and recommend to us the frequent uſe of this Sacrament, or rather imply an obligation upon Chriſtians to embrace all opportunities of receiving it. For the ſenſe and meaning of any Law or Inſtitution is beſt underſtood by the general practice which follows immediately upon it.

And to convince men of their obligation hereunto, and to engage them to a ſutable practice, I ſhall now endeavour with all the plainneſs and force of perſuaſion I can: And ſo much the more, becauſe the neglect of it among Chriſtians is grown ſo general, and a great many perſons from a ſuperſtitious awe and reverence of this Sacrament are by degrees fallen into a profane neglect and contempt of it.

I ſhall briefly mention a *threefold* Obligation lying upon all Chriſtians to frequent Communion in this holy Sacrament; each of them ſufficient of it ſelf, but all of them together of the greateſt force imaginable to engage us hereunto.

1. We are obliged in point of *indiſpenſable duty*, and in obedience to a plain precept and moſt ſolemn inſtitution of our bleſſed Saviour that great *Lawgiver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy*, as St.

James calls him: He hath bid us *doe this.* And S. *Paul* who declars nothing in this matter but what he tells us he *received from the Lord*, admoniſheth us to doe it *often.* Now for any man that profeſſeth himſelf a Chriſtian to live in the open and continued contempt or neglect of a plain Law and Inſtitution of *Chriſt* is utterly inconſiſtent with ſuch a profeſſion. To ſuch our Lord may ſay as he did to the *Jews, Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and doe not the things which I ſay?* How far the Ignorance of this Inſtitution, or the miſtakes which men have been led into about it, may extenuate this neglect is another conſideration. But after we know our Lord's will in this particular and have the Law plainly laid before us, there is no cloak for our ſin. For nothing can excuſe the wilfull neglect of a plain Inſtitution from a downright contempt of our Saviour's Authority.

2. We are likewiſe obliged hereunto in point of *Intereſt.* The benefits which we expect to be derived and aſſured to us by this Sacrament are all the bleſſings of the new Covenant, the forgiveneſs of our ſins, the grace and aſſiſtance of God's holy Spirit to enable us to perform the conditions of this Covenant required on our part;

part; and the comforts of God's holy Spirit to encourage us in well-doing, and to ſupport us under ſufferings; and the glorious reward of eternal life. So that in neglecting this Sacrament we neglect our own intereſt and happineſs, we forſake our own mercies, and judge our ſelves unworthy of all the bleſſings of the Goſpel, and deprive our ſelves of one of the beſt means and advantages of confirming and conveying theſe bleſſings to us. So that if we had not a due ſenſe of our *duty*, the conſideration of our own *intereſt* ſhould oblige us not to neglect ſo excellent and ſo effectual a means of promoting our own comfort and happineſs.

3. We are likewiſe particularly obliged in point of *gratitude* to the carefull obſervance of this Inſtitution. This was the particular thing our Lord gave in charge when he was going to lay down his life for us, *doe this in remmbrance of me*. Men uſe religiouſly to obſerve the charge of a dying friend, and, unleſs it be very difficult and unreaſonable, to doe what he deſires: But this is the charge of our beſt friend (nay of the greateſt friend and benefactour of all mankind) when he was preparing himſelf to dye in

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our ſtead and to offer up himſelf a ſacrifice for us; to undergo the moſt grievous pains and ſufferings for our ſakes, and to yield up himſelf to the worſt of temporal deaths that he might deliver us from the bitter pains of eternal death. And can we deny him any thing he asks of us who was going to doe all this for us? Can we deny him this? ſo little grievous and burthenſome in it ſelf, ſo infinitely beneficial to us? Had ſuch a friend, and in ſuch circumſtances, bid us doe ſome great thing would we not have done it? how much more when he hath only ſaid, *doe this in remembrance of me*; when he hath only commended to us one of the moſt natural and delightfull Actions, as a fit repreſentation and memorial of his wonderfull love to us, and of his cruel ſufferings for our ſakes; when he hath only enjoyned us, in a thankfull commemoration of his goodneſs, to meet at his Table and to remember what he hath done for us, to look upon him whom we have pierced, and to reſolve to grieve and wound him no more? Can we without the moſt horrible ingratitude neglect this dying charge of our Sovereign and our Saviour, the great friend and lover of ſouls? A command ſo reaſonable, ſo eaſie,

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ſo full of bleſſings and benefits to the faithfull obſervers of it!

One would think it were no difficult matter to convince men of their duty in this particular, and of the neceſſity of obſerving ſo plain an Inſtitution of our Lord; that it were no hard thing to perſuade men to their intereſt, and to be willing to partake of thoſe great and manifold bleſſings which all Chriſtians believe to be promiſed and made good to the frequent and worthy Receivers of this Sacrament. Where then lies the difficulty? what ſhould be the cauſe of all this backwardneſs which we ſee in men to ſo plain, ſo neceſſary, and ſo beneficial a duty? The truth is, men have been greatly diſcouraged from this Sacrament by the unwary preſſing & inculcating of two great truths; *the danger of the unworthy receiving of this holy Sacrament, and the neceſſity of a due preparation for it.* Which brings me to the

III. *Third* Particular I propoſed, which was to endeavour to ſatisfie the *Objections* and *Scruples* which have been raiſed in the minds of men, and particularly of many devout and ſincere Chriſtians, to their great diſcouragement from the receiving of this Sacrament, at leaſt ſo frequently III.

frequently as they ought. And theſe Objections, I told you, are chiefly grounded upon what the *Apoſtle* ſays at the 27th. *verſe. Wherefore whoſoever ſhall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord.* And again *ver.* 29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf.* Upon the miſtake and miſapplication of theſe *Texts* have been grounded *two* Objections, of great force to diſcourage men from this Sacrament, which I ſhall endeavour with all the tenderneſs and clearneſs I can to remove. *Firſt*, That the danger of unworthy receiving being ſo very great, it ſeems the ſafeſt way not to receive at all. *Secondly*, That ſo much preparation and worthineſs being required in order to our worthy Receiving, the more timorous ſort of devout Chriſtians can never think themſelves duly enough qualified for ſo ſacred an Action.

Obj. 1. 1. That the danger of unworthy receiving being ſo very great it ſeems the ſafeſt way wholly to refrain from this Sacrament and not to receive it at all. But this Objection is evidently of no force if there be (as moſt certainly there is) as great or a greater danger on the other

other hand, *viz.* in the neglect of this Duty: And ſo though the danger of unworthy receiving be avoided by not receiving, yet the danger of neglecting and condemning a plain Inſtitution of Chriſt is not thereby avoided. Surely they in the *Parable* that refuſed to come to the *marriage-feaſt* of the *King's Son* and *made light* of that gracious invitation were at leaſt as faulty as he who came *without a wedding garment*. And we find in the concluſion of the *Parable*, that as he was ſeverely puniſhed for his diſreſpect, ſo they were deſtroyed for their diſobedience. Nay of the two it is the greater ſign of contempt wholly to neglect the Sacrament, than to partake of it without ſome due qualification. The greateſt indiſpoſition that can be for this holy Sacrament is ones being a bad man, and he may be as bad, and is more likely to continue ſo, who wilfully neglects this Sacrament, than he that comes to it with any degree of reverence and preparation, though much leſs than he ought: And ſurely it is very hard for men to come to ſo ſolemn an Ordinance without ſome kind of religious awe upon their Spirits, and without ſome good thoughts and reſolutions, at leaſt for the preſent. If a

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man that lives in any known wickedneſs of life do before he receive the Sacrment ſet himſelf ſeriouſly to be humbled for his ſins, and to repent of them, and to beg God's grace and aſſiſtance againſt them; and after the receiving of it, does continue for ſome time in theſe good reſolutions, though after a while he may poſſibly relapſe into the ſame ſins again; this is ſome kind of reſtraint to a wicked life; and theſe good moods and fits of repentance and reformation are much better than a conſtant and uninterrupted courſe of ſin: even this *righteouſneſs*, which is but *as the morning cloud and the early dew which ſo ſoon paſſeth away*, is better than none.

And indeed ſcarce any man can think of coming to the Sacrament, but he will by this conſideration be excited to ſome good purpoſes, and put upon ſome ſort of endeavour to amend and reform his life: and though he be very much under the bondage and power of evil habits, if he do with any competent degree of ſincerity (and it is his own fault if he do not) make uſe of this excellent means and inſtrument for the mortifying and ſubduing of his luſts and for the obtaining of God's grace and aſſiſtence, it may pleaſe God by the uſe of theſe means ſo to

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abate the force and power of his luſts, and to imprint ſuch conſiderations upon his mind in the receiving of this holy Sacrament and preparing himſelf for it, that he may at laſt break off his wicked courſe and become a good man.

But, on the other hand, as to thoſe who neglect this Sacrament, there is hardly any thing left to reſtrain them from the greateſt enormities of life, and to give a check to them in their evil courſe: nothing but the penalty of humane Laws, which men may avoid and yet be wicked enough. Heretofore men uſed to be reſtrained from great and ſcandalous vices by ſhame and fear of diſgrace, and would abſtain from many ſins out of regard to their honour and reputation among men: But men have hardned their faces in this degenerate Age, and thoſe gentle reſtraints of modeſty which governed and kept men in order heretofore ſignifie nothing now adays. Bluſhing is out of faſhion, and ſhame is ceaſed from among the Children of men.

But the Sacrament did always uſe to lay ſome kind of reſtraint upon the worſt of men: and if it did not wholly reform them, it would at leaſt have ſome good effect upon them for a time: If it did not make men good, yet it would make them

them resolve to be so, and leave some good thoughts and impressions upon their minds.

So that I doubt not but it hath been a thing of very bad consequence, to discourage men so much from the Sacrament, as the way hath been of late years: And that many men who were under some kind of check before, since they have been driven away from the Sacrament have quite let loose the reins, and prostituted themselves to all manner of impiety and vice. And among the many ill effects of our past confusions, this is none of the least, That in many Congregations of this Kingdom Christians were generally disused and deterred from the Sacrament, upon a pretence that they were unfit for it: and being so, they must necessarily incur the danger of unworthy receiving; and therefore they had better wholly to abstain from it. By which it came to pass that in very many Places this great and solemn Institution of the Christian Religion was almost quite forgotten, as if it had been no part of it; and the remembrance of Christ's death even lost among Christians: So that many Congregations in *England* might justly have taken up the complaint of the Woman at our Saviour's Sepulchre, *they have taken away our Lord,*

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and we know not where they have laid him.

But ſurely men did not well conſider what they did, nor what the conſequences of it would be, when they did ſo earneſtly diſſuade men from the Sacrament. 'Tis true indeed the danger of unworthy receiving is great; but the proper inference and concluſion from hence is not that men ſhould upon this conſideration be deterred from the Sacrament, but that they ſhould be affrighted from their ſins, and from that wicked courſe of life which is an habitual indiſpoſition and unworthineſs. St. *Paul* indeed (as I obſerved before) truly repreſents, and very much aggravates the danger of the unworthy receiving of this Sacrament; but he did not deter the *Corinthians* from it, becauſe they had ſometimes come to it without due reverence, but exhorts them to amend what had been amiſs and to come better prepared and diſpoſed for the future. And therefore after that terrible declaration in the Text, *Whoſoever ſhall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord*, he does not add, therefore let Chriſtians take heed of coming to the Sacrament, but, let them come prepared and with due reve-

rence, not as to a common meal, but to a ſolemn participation of the body and bloud of Chriſt; *but let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.*

For, if this be a good reaſon to abſtain from the Sacrament, for fear of performing ſo ſacred an action in an undue manner, it were beſt for a bad man to lay aſide all Religion and to give over the exerciſe of all the duties of piety, of prayer, of reading and hearing the Word of God; becauſe there is a proportionable danger in the unworthy and unprofitable uſe of any of theſe. *The prayer of the wicked* (that is, of one that reſolves to continue ſo) *is an abomination to the Lord.* And our *Saviour* gives us the ſame caution concerning hearing the Word of God; *take heed how you hear.* And St. *Paul* tells us, that thoſe who are not reformed by the Doctrine of the *Goſpel*, it is *the ſavour of death*, that is, deadly and damnable to ſuch perſons.

But now will any man from hence argue, that it is beſt for a wicked man not to pray, nor to hear or reade the Word of God, leſt by ſo doing he ſhould endanger and aggravate his condemnation; And yet there is as much reaſon from

from this consideration to perſuade men to give over praying and attending to God's Word, as to lay aſide the uſe of the Sacrament. And it is every whit as true that he that prays unworthily and hears the Word of God unworthily, that is, without fruit and benefit, is guilty of a great contempt of God and of our bleſſed Saviour; and by his indevout prayers and unfruitfull hearing of God's Word does further and aggravate his own damnation: I ſay, this is every whit as true, as that he that eats and drinks the Sacrament unworthily is guilty of a high contempt of Chriſt, and *eats and drinks his own Judgment*; ſo that the danger of the unworthy performing this ſo ſacred an action is no otherwiſe a reaſon to any man to abſtain from the Sacrament, than it is an Argument to him to caſt off all Religion. He that unworthily uſeth or performs any part of Religion is in an evil and dangerous condition; but he that caſts off all Religion plungeth himſelf into a moſt deſperate ſtate, and does certainly damn himſelf to avoid the danger of damnation: Becauſe he that caſts off all Religion throws off all the means whereby he ſhould be reclaimed and brought into a better ſtate. I cannot

more fitly illuſtrate this matter than by this plain Similitude: He that eats and drinks intemperately endangers his health and his life, but he that to avoid this danger will not eat at all, I need not tell you what will certainly become of him in a very ſhort ſpace.

There are ſome conſcientious perſons who abſtain from the Sacrament upon an apprehenſion that the ſins which they ſhall commit afterwards are unpardonable. But this is a great miſtake; our Saviour having ſo plainly declared that all manner of ſin ſhall be forgiven men except the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt; ſuch as was that of the *Phariſees*, who as our Saviour tells us blaſphemed the Holy Ghoſt in aſcribing thoſe great miracles which they ſaw him work, and which he really wrought by the Spirit of God, to the power of the Devil. Indeed to ſin deliberately after ſo ſolemn an engagement to the contrary is a great aggravation of ſin, but not ſuch as to make it unpardonable. But the neglect of the Sacrament is not the way to prevent theſe ſins; but, on the contrary, the conſtant receiving of it with the beſt preparation we can is one of the moſt effectual means to prevent ſin for

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the future, and to obtain the aſſiſtence of God's grace to that end: And if we fall into ſin afterwards, we may be renewed by repentance; *for we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, who is the propitiation for our ſins*; and as ſuch, is in a very lively and affecting manner exhibited to us in this bleſſed Sacrament of his body broken, and his bloud ſhed for the remiſſion of our ſins. Can we think that the Primitive Chriſtians, who ſo frequently received this holy Sacrament, did never after the receiving of it fall into any deliberate ſin? undoubtedly, many of them did; but far be it from us to think that ſuch ſins were unpardonable, and that ſo many good men ſhould becauſe of their carefull and conſcientious obſervance of our Lord's Inſtitution unavoidably fall into condemnation.

To draw to a concluſion of this matter: ſuch groundleſs fears and jealouſies as theſe may be a ſign of a good meaning, but they are certainly a ſign of an injudicious mind. For if we ſtand upon theſe Scruples, no man perhaps was ever ſo worthily prepared to draw near to God in any duty of Religion, but there was ſtill ſome defect or other in the

diſpoſition of his mind, and the degree of his preparation. But if we prepare our ſelves as well as we can, this is all God expects. And for our fears of falling into ſin afterwards, there is this plain anſwer to be given to it; that the danger of falling into ſin is not prevented by neglecting the Sacrament, but encreaſed: becauſe a powerfull and probable means of preſerving men from ſin is neglected. And why ſhould not every ſincere Chriſtian, by the receiving of this Sacrament and renewing his Covenant with God, rather hope to be confirmed in goodneſs, and to receive farther aſſiſtences of God's grace and holy Spirit to ſtrengthen him againſt ſin and to enable him to ſubdue it; than trouble himſelf with fears which are either without ground, or if they are not, are no ſufficient reaſon to keep any man from the Sacrament? We cannot ſurely entertain ſo unworthy a thought of God and our bleſſed Saviour, as to imagine that he did inſtitute the Sacrament not for the furtherance of our Salvation, but as a ſnare, and an occaſion of our ruine and damnation. This were to pervert the gracious deſign of God, and to turn the cup of Salvation into a cup of deadly poiſon to the ſouls of men.

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All then that can reasonably be inferred from the danger of unworthy receiving is, that upon this consideration men should be quickned to come to the Sacrament with a due preparation of mind, and so much the more to fortifie their resolutions of living suitably to that holy Covenant which they solemnly renew every time they receive this holy Sacrament. This consideration ought to convince us of the absolute necessity of a good life, but not to deter us from the use of any means which may contribute to make us good. Therefore (as a learned *Divine* says very well) this Sacrament can be neglected by none but those that do not understand it, but those who are unwilling to be tyed to their duty and are afraid of being engaged to use their best diligence to keep the commandments of Christ: And such persons have no reason to fear being in a worse condition, since they are already in so bad a state. And thus much may suffice for answer to the *first Objection* concerning the great danger of unworthy receiving this holy Sacrament. I proceed to the

2. *Second Objection*, which was this; *Obj.* 2. That so much preparation and worthiness being required to our worthy receiving,

the more timorous ſort of Chriſtians can never think themſelves duly enough qualified for ſo ſacred an Action.

For a full Anſwer to this Objection, I ſhall endeavour briefly to clear theſe *three* things. *Firſt*, That every degree of Imperfection in our preparation for this Sacrament is not a ſufficient reaſon for men to refrain from it. *Secondly*, That a total want of a due preparation, not only in the degree but in the main and ſubſtance of it, though it render us unfit at preſent to receive this Sacrament, yet it does by no means excuſe our neglect of it. *Thirdly*, That the proper Inference and concluſion from the total want of a due preparation is not to caſt off all thoughts of receiving the Sacrament, but immediately to ſet upon the work of Preparation that ſo we may be fit to receive it. And if I can clearly make out theſe *three* things, I hope this Objection is fully anſwered.

1. That every degree of imperfection in our preparation for this Sacrament is not a ſufficient reaſon for men to abſtain from it: For then no man ſhould ever receive it. For who is every way worthy, and in all degrees and reſpects duly qualified to approach the preſence of God in any

any of the duties of his Worſhip and Service? Who can *waſh his hands in innocency*, that ſo he may be perfectly fit to approach God's Altar? *There is not a man on earth that lives and ſins not.* The Graces of the beſt men are imperfect; and every imperfection in grace and goodneſs is an imperfection in the diſpoſition and preparation of our minds for this holy Sacrament: But if we do heartily repent of our ſins, and ſincerely reſolve to obey and perform the terms of the Goſpel, and of that Covenant which we entred into by Baptiſm, and are going ſolemnly to renew and confirm by our receiving of this Sacrament, we are at leaſt in ſome degree and in the main qualified to partake of this holy Sacrament; and the way for us to be more fit is to receive this Sacrament frequently, that by this ſpiritual food of God's appointing, by *this living bread which comes down from heaven* our ſouls may be nouriſhed in goodneſs, and new ſtrength and vertue may be continually derived to us for the purifying of our hearts and enabling us to run the ways of God's commandments with more conſtancy and delight. For the way *to grow in grace* and to be *ſtrengthened with all might in the inner man*,

and

and to *abound in all the fruits of righteousness which by Christ Jesus are to the praise and glory of God*, is with care and conscience to use those means which God hath appointed for this end. And if we will neglect the use of these means it is to no purpose for us to pray to God for his grace and assistence. We may tire our selves with our devotions and fill heaven with vain complaints, and yet by all this importunity obtain nothing at God's hand: Like lazy beggars that are always complaining and always asking, but will not work, will do nothing to help themselves and better their condition, and therefore are never like to move the pity and compassion of others. If we expect God's grace and assistence, we must work out our own Salvation in the carefull use of all those means which God hath appointed to that end. That excellent degree of goodness which men would have to fit them for the Sacrament, is not to be had but by the use of it. And therefore it is a preposterous thing for men to insist upon having the end before they will use the means that may further them in the obtaining of it.

2. The total want of a due preparation, not only in the degree but in the main

main and ſubſtance of it, though it render us unfit at preſent to receive this Sacrament, yet does it by no means excuſe our neglect of it. One fault may draw on another, but can never excuſe it. It is our great fault that we are wholly unprepared, and no man can claim any benefit by his fault, or plead it in excuſe or extenuation of this neglect. A total want of preparation and an abſolute unworthineſs is Impenitency in an evil courſe, a reſolution to continue a bad man, not to quit his luſts and to break off that wicked courſe he hath lived in: But is this any excuſe for the neglect of our duty that we will not fit our ſelves for the doing of it with benefit and advantage to our ſelves? A father commands his ſon to ask him bleſſing every day, and is ready to give it him; but ſo long as he is undutifull to him in his other actions, and lives in open diſobedience, forbids him to come in his ſight. He excuſeth himſelf from asking his father bleſſing, becauſe he is undutifull in other things, and reſolves to continue ſo. This is juſt the caſe of neglecting the duty God requires, and the bleſſings he offers to us in the Sacrament, becauſe we have made our ſelves incapable

ble of ſo performing the one as to receive the other; and are reſolved to continue ſo. We will not do our duty in other things, & then plead that we are unfit and unworthy to do it in this particular of the Sacrament.

3. The proper Inference and concluſion from a total want of due preparation for the Sacrament is not to caſt off all thoughts of receiving it, but immediately to ſet about the work of preparation, that ſo we may be fit to receive it. For if this be true, that they who are abſolutely unprepared ought not to receive the Sacrament, nor can do it with any benefit; nay by doing it in ſuch a manner render their condition much worſe, this is a moſt forcible argument to repentance and amendment of life: There is nothing reaſonable in this caſe but immediately to reſolve upon a better courſe, that ſo we may be meet partakers of thoſe holy Myſteries, and may no longer provoke God's wrath againſt us by the wilfull neglect of ſo great and neceſſary a duty of the Chriſtian Religion. And we do wilfully neglect it, ſo long as we do wilfully refuſe to fit and qualifie our ſelves for the due and worthy performance of it. Let us view the thing in a like caſe; A Pardon is graciouſly

ciouſly offered to a Rebel, he declines to accept it, and modeſtly excuſeth himſelf becauſe he is not worthy of it. And why is he not worthy? becauſe he reſolves to be a Rebel, and then his pardon will do him no good, but be an aggravation of his crime. Very true: and it will be no leſs an aggravation that he refuſeth it for ſuch a reaſon, and under a pretence of modeſty does the moſt imprudent thing in the world. This is juſt the caſe; and in this caſe there is but one thing reaſonable to be done, and that is, for a man to make himſelf capable of the benefit as ſoon as he can, and thankfully to accept of it: but to excuſe himſelf from accepting of the benefit offered, becauſe he is not worthy of it, nor fit for it, nor ever intends to be ſo, is as if a man ſhould deſire to be excuſed from being happy becauſe he is reſolved to play the fool and to be miſerable. So that whether our want of preparation be total, or only to ſome degree, it is every way unreaſonable: If it be in the degree only, it ought not to hinder us from receiving the Sacrament; If it be total, it ought to put us immediately upon removing the impediment, by making ſuch preparation as is neceſſary to the due and worthy receiving of it. And this brings me to the

IV. *Fourth*

IV. IV. *Fourth* and laſt thing I propoſed, *viz.* What preparation of our ſelves is neceſſary in order to the worthy receiving of this Sacrament. Which I told you would give me occaſion to explain the *Apoſtle*'s meaning in the laſt part of the *Text*, *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* I think it very clear from the occaſion and circumſtances of the *Apoſtle*'s diſcourſe concerning the Sacrament that he does not intend the examination of our ſtate, whether we be Chriſtians or not, and ſincerely reſolved to continue ſo; and conſequently that he does not here ſpeak of our habitual preparation by the reſolution of a good life. This he takes for granted, that they were Chriſtians and reſolved to continue and perſevere in their Chriſtian profeſſion: But he ſpeaks of their actual fitneſs and worthineſs at that time when they came to receive the Lord's Supper. And for the clearing of this matter, we muſt conſider what it was that gave occaſion to this diſcourſe. At the 20th *verſe* of this *Chapter* he ſharply reproves their irreverent and unſutable carriage at the Lord's Supper. They came to it very diſorderly, *one before another.* It was the cuſtom of Chriſtians to meet at their *Feaſt of Charity*, in which they did com-

communicate with great sobriety and temperance; and when that was ended they celebrated the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Now among the *Corinthians* this order was broken: The rich met and excluded the poor from this common Feast. And after an irregular Feast (one before another eating his own supper as he came) they went to the Sacrament in great disorder; *one was hungry* having eaten nothing at all; *others were drunk*, having eaten intemperately; and the poor were despised and neglected. This the *Apostle* condemns as a great profanation of that solemn Institution of the Sacrament; at the participation whereof they behaved themselves with as little reverence as if they had been met at a common supper or feast. And this he calls *not discerning the Lord's body*, making no difference in their behaviour between the Sacrament and a common meal: which irreverent and contemptuous carriage of theirs he calls *eating and drinking unworthily*: for which he pronounceth them *guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord*, which were represented and commemorated in their *eating of that bread and drinking of that cup*. By which irreverent and contemptuous usage of the Body and Bloud of our Lord,

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Lord, he tells them that they did incur the Judgment of God; which he calls *eating and drinking their own judgment.* For that the word κρίμα, which our *Tranſlatours* render *damnation*, does not here ſignifie eternal condemnation, but a temporal judgment and chaſtiſement in order to the prevention of eternal condemnation is evident from what follows; *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himſelf:* And then he ſays, *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep:* that is, for this irreverence of theirs God had ſent among them ſeveral diſeaſes, of which many had died. And then he adds, *For if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged. If we would judge our ſelves;* whether this be meant of the publick Cenſures of the Church, or our private cenſuring of our ſelves in order to our future amendment and reformation, is not certain. If of the latter, which I think moſt probable, then *judging* here is much the ſame with *examining our ſelves*, *v.* 28. And then the *Apoſtle*'s meaning is, that if we would cenſure and examine our ſelves, ſo as to be more carefull for the future, we ſhould eſcape the judgment of God in theſe temporal puniſhments. *But when we*

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are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world. But when we are judged; that is, when by neglecting thus to judge our ſelves we provoke God to judge us; *we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world*; that is, he inflicts theſe temporal judgments upon us to prevent our eternal condemnation. Which plainly ſhews, that the judgment here ſpoken of is not eternal condemnation. And then he concludes, *Wherefore, my Brethren, when ye come together to eat tarry for one another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto judgment:* where the *Apoſtle* plainly ſhews both what was the crime of unworthy receiving, and the puniſhment of it. Their crime was, their irreverent and diſorderly participation of the Sacrament; and their puniſhment was, thoſe temporal judgments which God inflicted upon them for this their contempt of the Sacrament.

Now this being, I think, very plain; we are proportionably to underſtand the precept of examination of our ſelves *before we eat of that bread and drink of that cup. But let a man examine himſelf*; that is, conſider well with himſelf what a ſacred

Action he is going about, and what behaviour becomes him when he is celebrating this Sacrament inſtituted by our Lord in memorial of his body and bloud, that is, of his death and paſſion: And if heretofore he have been guilty of any diſorder and irreverence (ſuch as the *Apoſtle* here taxeth them withall) let him cenſure and *judge himſelf* for it, be ſenſible of and ſorry for his fault, and be carefull to avoid it for the future; and having thus *examined himſelf, let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* This, I think, is the plain ſenſe of the *Apoſtle*'s Diſcourſe; and that if we attend to the ſcope and circumſtances of it, it cannot well have any other meaning.

But ſome will ſay, Is this all the preparation that is required to our worthy receiving of the Sacrament, that we take care not to come drunk to it, nor to be guilty of any irreverence and diſorder in the celebration of it? I anſwer in ſhort, this was the particular unworthineſs with which the *Apoſtle* taxeth the *Corinthians*; and which he warns them to amend, as they deſire to eſcape the judgments of God, ſuch as they had already felt for this irreverent carriage of theirs, ſo unſutable to the holy Sacrament: He finds no other fault with them at preſent in this

this matter, though any other ſort of irreverence will proportionably expoſe men to the like puniſhment. He ſays nothing here of their habitual preparation, by the ſincere purpoſe and reſolution of a good life anſwerable to the rules of the Chriſtian Religion: This we may ſuppoſe he took for granted. However, it concerns the Sacrament no more than it does Prayer or any other religious duty. Not but that it is very true that none but thoſe who do heartily embrace the Chriſtian Religion and are ſincerely reſolved to frame their lives according to the holy rules and precepts of it, are fit to communicate in this ſolemn acknowledgment and profeſſion of it. So that it is a practice very much to be countenanced and encouraged, becauſe it is of great uſe, for Chriſtians by way of preparation for the Sacrament to examine themſelves in a larger ſenſe than in all probability the *Apoſtle* here intended: I mean, to examine our paſt lives and the actions of them in order to a ſincere repentance of all our errours and miſcarriages, and to fix us in the ſteady purpoſe and reſolution of a better life: particularly, when we expect to have the forgiveneſs of our ſins ſealed to us, we ſhould lay aſide all enmity and thoughts

of revenge, and heartily forgive thoſe that have offended us, and put in practice that univerſal love and charity which is repreſented to us by this holy Communion. And to this purpoſe we are earneſtly exhorted in the publick *Office* of the *Communion* by way of due preparation and diſpoſition for it, to *repent us truly of our ſins paſt, to amend our lives, and to be in perfect charity with all men, that ſo we may be meet partakers of thoſe holy myſteries.*

And becauſe this work of examining our ſelves concerning our ſtate and condition, and of exerciſing repentance towards God and charity towards men is incumbent upon us as we are Chriſtians, and can never be put in practice more ſeaſonably and with greater advantage than when we are meditating of this Sacrament, therefore beſides our habitual preparation by repentance and the conſtant endeavours of a holy life, it is a very pious and commendable cuſtome in Chriſtians before their coming to the Sacrament to ſet apart ſome particular time for this work of examination. But how much time every perſon ſhould allot to this purpoſe, is matter of prudence; and as it need not, ſo neither indeed can it be preciſely determined. Some have greater

ter reaſon to ſpend more time upon this work than others; I mean thoſe whoſe accounts are heavier, becauſe they have long run upon the ſcore and neglected themſelves: And ſome alſo have more leiſure and freedom for it, by reaſon of their eaſie condition and circumſtances in the world; and therefore are obliged to allow a greater portion of Time for the exerciſes of piety and devotion. In general, no man ought to doe a work of ſo great moment and concernment ſlightly and perfunctorily. And in this, as in all other actions, the end is principally to be regarded. Now the end of examining our ſelves is to underſtand our ſtate and condition, and to reform whatever we find amiſs in our ſelves. And provided this end be obtained, the circumſtances of the means are leſs conſiderable: whether more or leſs time be allowed to this work it matters not ſo much, as to make ſure that the work be throughly done.

And I do on purpoſe ſpeak thus cautiouſly in this matter, becauſe ſome pious perſons do perhaps err on the ſtricter hand, and are a little ſuperſtitious on that ſide; inſomuch that unleſs they can gain ſo much time to ſet apart for a ſolemn preparation, they will refrain from the

Sacrament at that time; though otherwiſe they be habitually prepared. This I doubt not proceeds from a pious mind; but as the *Apoſtle* ſays in another caſe about the Sacrament, *ſhall I praiſe them in this? I praiſe them not.* For, provided there be no wilfull neglect of due preparation, it is much better to come ſo prepared as we can, nay I think it is our duty ſo to doe, rather than to abſtain upon this *punctilio.* For when all is done, the beſt preparation for the Sacrament is the general care and endeavour of a good life: And he that is thus prepared may receive at any time when opportunity is offered, though he had no particular foreſight of that opportunity. And I think in that caſe ſuch a one ſhall do much better to receive than to refrain; becauſe he is habitually prepared for the Sacrament, though he had no time to make ſuch actual preparation as he deſired. And if this were not allowable how could Miniſters communicate with ſick perſons at all times, or perſuade others to doe it many times upon very ſhort and ſudden warning?

And indeed we cannot imagine that the Primitive Chriſtians, who received the Sacrament ſo frequently that for ought appears to the contrary they judged it as eſſen-

eſſential and neceſſary a part of their publick worſhip as any other part of it whatſoever, even as their Hymns and Prayers, and reading and interpreting the Word of God: I ſay, we cannot well conceive how they who celebrated it ſo conſtantly, could allot any more time for a ſolemn preparation for it, than they did for any other part of divine worſhip: And conſequently, that the *Apoſtle* when he bids the *Corinthians* examine themſelves could mean no more than that conſidering the nature and ends of this Inſtitution they ſhould come to it with great reverence; and reflecting upon their former miſcarriages in this matter, ſhould be carefull upon this admonition to avoid them for the future and to amend what had been amiſs: which to doe, requires rather reſolution and care than any long time of preparation.

I ſpeak this, that devout perſons may not be intangled in an apprehenſion of a greater neceſſity than really there is of a long and ſolemn preparation every time they receive the Sacrament. The great neceſſity that lies upon men is to live as becomes Chriſtians, and then they can never be abſolutely unprepared. Nay, I think this to be a very good preparation;

and I ſee not why men ſhould not be very well ſatisfied with it, unleſs they intend to make the ſame uſe of the Sacrament that many of the Papiſts do of Confeſſion and Abſolution, which is to quit with God once or twice a year, that ſo they may begin to ſin again upon a new ſcore.

But becauſe the Examination of our ſelves is a thing ſo very uſefull, and the time which men are wont to ſet apart for their preparation for the Sacrament is ſo advantageous an opportunity for the practice of it; therefore I cannot but very much commend thoſe who take this occaſion to ſearch and try their ways, and to call themſelves to a more ſolemn account of their actions. Becauſe this ought to be done ſometime, and I know no fitter time for it than this. And perhaps ſome would never find time to recollect themſelves and to take the condition of their ſouls into ſerious conſideration, were it not upon this ſolemn occaſion.

The ſumm of what I have ſaid is this, that ſuppoſing a perſon to be habitually prepared by a religious diſpoſition of mind and the general courſe of a good life, this more ſolemn actual preparation is not always neceſſary: And it is better when there is an opportunity to receive without

out it, than not to receive at all. But the greater our actual preparation is, the better. For no man can examine himſelf too often, and underſtand the ſtate of his ſoul too well, and exerciſe repentance, and renew the reſolutions of a good life too frequently. And there is perhaps no fitter opportunity for the doing of all this, than when we approach the Lord's table, there to commemorate his death, and to renew our Covenant with him to live as becomes the Goſpel.

All the Reflexion I ſhall now make upon this Diſcourſe, ſhall be from the conſideration of what hath been ſaid earneſtly to excite all that profeſs and call themſelves Chriſtians to a due preparation of themſelves for this holy Sacrament, and a frequent participation of it according to the intention of our Lord and Saviour in the inſtitution of it, and the undoubted practice of Chriſtians in the primitive and beſt times, when men had more devotion and fewer ſcruples about their duty.

If we do in good earneſt believe that this Sacrament was inſtituted by our Lord in remembrance of his dying love, we cannot but have a very high value and eſteem for it upon that account. Methinks ſo often as we reade in the inſti-

tution

tion of it thoſe words of our dear Lord, *doe this in remembrance of me*, and conſider what he who ſaid them did for us, this dying charge of our beſt friend ſhould ſtick with us and make a ſtrong impreſſion upon our minds: Eſpecially if we add to theſe, thoſe other words of his, not long before his death, *Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend; ye are my friends if ye do whatſoever I command you.* It is a wonderfull love which he hath expreſſed to us, and worthy to be had in perpetual remembrance. And all that he expects from us, by way of thankfull acknowledgment, is to celebrate the remembrance of it by the frequent participation of this bleſſed Sacrament. And ſhall this charge, laid upon us by him who laid down his life for us, lay no obligation upon us to the ſolemn remembrance of that unparallel'd kindneſs which is the fountain of ſo many bleſſings and benefits to us? It is a ſign we have no great ſenſe of the benefit when we are ſo unmindfull of our benefactour as to forget him days without number. The Obligation he hath laid upon us is ſo vaſtly great, not only beyond all requital but beyond all expreſſion, that if he had commanded

manded us ſome very grievous thing we ought with all the readineſs and chearfulneſs in the world to have done it; how much more when he hath impoſed upon us ſo eaſie a commandment, a thing of no burthen but of immenſe benefit? when he hath onely ſaid to us, *Eat O friends, and drink O beloved*? when he onely invites us to his table, to the beſt and moſt delicious Feaſt that we can partake of on this ſide heaven?

If we ſeriouſly believe the great bleſſings which are there exhibited to us and ready to be conferred upon us, we ſhould be ſo far from neglecting them, that we ſhould heartily thank God for every opportunity he offers to us of being made partakers of ſuch benefits. When ſuch a price is put into our hands, ſhall we want hearts to make uſe of it? Methinks we ſhould long with *David* (who ſaw but the ſhadow of theſe bleſſings) to be ſatisfied with the good things of God's houſe, and to draw near his altar; and ſhould cry out with him, *O when ſhall I come and appear before thee! My ſoul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, and my fleſh cryeth out for the living God.* And if we had a juſt eſteem of things, we ſhould account it the greateſt

eſt infelicity and judgment in the world to be debarred of this privilege, which yet we do deliberately and frequently deprive our ſelves of.

We exclaim againſt the Church of *Rome* with great impatience, and with a very juſt indignation, for robbing the People of half of this bleſſed Sacrament, and taking from them the *cup of bleſſing, the cup of ſalvation*; and yet we can patiently endure for ſome months, nay years, to exclude our ſelves wholly from it. If no ſuch great benefits and bleſſings belong to it, why do we complain of them for hindring us of any part of it? But if there do, why do we by our own neglect deprive our ſelves of the whole?

In vain do we bemoan the decay of our graces and our ſlow progreſs and improvement in Chriſtianity, whilſt we wilfully deſpiſe the beſt means of our growth in goodneſs. Well do we deſerve that God ſhould ſend leanneſs into our ſouls, and make them to conſume and pine away in perpetual doubting and trouble, if, when God himſelf doth ſpread ſo bountifull a Table for us and ſet before us the bread of life, we will not come and feed upon it with joy and thankfulneſs.

A

A DISCOURSE AGAINST *TRANSUBSTANTIATION.*

CONcerning the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, one of the two great positive Institutions of the Christian Religion; there are two main Points of difference between *Us* and the Church of *Rome*. *One*, about the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*; in which they think, but are not certain, that they have the Scripture and the words of our Saviour on their side: The *other*, about the administration of this Sacrament to the People in both kinds; in which we are sure that we have the Scripture and our Saviour's Institution on our side; and that so plainly that our Adversaries themselves do not deny it.

Of the *first* of these I shall now treat, and endeavour to shew against the Church of *Rome*, *That in this Sacrament, there is*

no

no ſubſtantial change made of the Elements of Bread and Wine into the natural Body and Bloud of Chriſt; that *Body* which was born of the *Virgin Mary*, and ſuffered upon the Croſs; for ſo they explain that hard word *Tranſubſtantiation*.

Before I engage in this Argument, I cannot but obſerve what an unreaſonable task we are put upon, by the bold confidence of our Adverſaries, to diſpute a matter of Senſe; which is one of thoſe things about which *Ariſtotle* hath long ſince pronounc'd there ought to be no diſpute.

It might well ſeem ſtrange if any man ſhould write a Book, to prove that an *Egg* is not an *Elephant*, and that a *Muſket-bullet* is not a *Pike*: It is every whit as hard a caſe, to be put to maintain by a long Diſcourſe, that what we ſee and handle and taſte to be *Bread* is *Bread*, and not the *Body of a man*; and what we ſee and taſte to be *Wine* is *Wine*, and not *Bloud*: And if this evidence may not paſs for ſufficient without any farther proof, I do not ſee why any man, that hath confidence enough to do ſo, may not deny any thing to be what all the World ſees it is; or affirm any thing to be what all the World ſees it is not; and this without all poſſibility of being farther

ther confuted. So that the buſineſs of *Tranſubſtantiation* is not a controverſie of Scripture againſt Scripture, or of Reaſon againſt Reaſon, but of downright Impudence againſt the plain meaning of Scripture, and all the Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind.

It is a moſt Self-evident Falſhood; and there is no Doctrine or Propoſition in the World that is of it ſelf more evidently true, than *Tranſubſtantiation* is evidently falſe: And yet if it were poſſible to be true, it would be the moſt ill-natur'd and pernicious truth in the World, becauſe it would ſuffer nothing elſe to be true; it is like the *Roman-Catholick* Church, which will needs be the whole Chriſtian Church, and will allow no other Society of Chriſtians to be any part of it: So *Tranſubſtantiation*, if it be true at all, it is all truth, and nothing elſe is true; for it cannot be true unleſs our Senſes, and the Senſes of all mankind be deceived about their proper objects; and if this be true and certain, then nothing elſe can be ſo; for if we be not certain of what we ſee, we can be certain of nothing.

And yet notwithſtanding all this, there are a Company of men in the World ſo abandon'd and given up by God to the efficacy

efficacy of deluſion as in good earneſt to believe this groſs and palpable Errour, and to impoſe the belief of it upon the Chriſtian World under no leſs penalties than of temporal death and eternal damnation. And therefore to undeceive, if poſſible, theſe deluded Souls, it will be neceſſary to examine the pretended grounds of ſo falſe a Doctrine, and to lay open the monſtrous abſurdity of it.

And in the handling of this Argument, I ſhall proceed in this plain method.

I. I ſhall conſider the pretended grounds and reaſons of the Church of *Rome* for this Doctrine.

II. I ſhall produce our *Objections* againſt *it*. And if I can ſhew that there is no tolerable ground for it, and that there are invincible Objections againſt it, then every man is not onely in reaſon excuſed from believing this Doctrine, but hath great cauſe to believe the contrary.

I. FIRST, I will conſider the pretended grounds and reaſons of the Church of *Rome* for this Doctrine. Which muſt be one or more of theſe *five*. Either 1ſt. The Authority of Scripture. Or 2ly. The perpetual belief of this Doctrine in the Chriſtian

ſtian Church, as an evidence that they always underſtood and interpreted our Saviour's words, *This is my body*, in this ſenſe. Or 3ly. The Authority of the preſent Church to make and declare new Articles of Faith. Or 4ly. The abſolute neceſſity of ſuch a change as this in the Sacrament to the comfort and benefit of thoſe who receive this Sacrament. Or 5ly. To magnifie the power of the Prieſt in being able to work ſo great a Miracle.

1*ſt*. They pretend for this Doctrine the Authority of Scripture in thoſe words of our Saviour, *This is my body*. Now to ſhew the inſufficiency of this pretence, I ſhall endeavour to make good theſe *two* things.

1. That there is no neceſſity of underſtanding thoſe words of our Saviour in the ſenſe of *Tranſubſtantiation*.

2. That there is a great deal of reaſon, nay that it is very abſurd and unreaſonable, to underſtand them otherwiſe.

Firſt, That there is no neceſſity to underſtand thoſe words of our Saviour in the ſenſe of *Tranſubſtantiation*. If there be any, it muſt be from one of theſe two reaſons. Either becauſe there are no figurative expreſſions in Scripture, which I think no man ever yet ſaid: or elſe, becauſe a Sacrament admits of no figures;

which would be very abſurd for any man to ſay, ſince it is of the very nature of a Sacrament to repreſent and exhibit ſome inviſible grace and benefit by an outward ſign and figure: And eſpecially ſince it cannot be denied, but that in the inſtitution of this very Sacrament our Saviour uſeth figurative expreſſions, and ſeveral words which cannot be taken ſtrictly and literally. When he gave the Cup he ſaid, *This Cup is the new Teſtament in my bloud, which is ſhed for you and for many for the remiſſion of Sins.* Where firſt, the *Cup* is put for the *Wine* contained in the Cup; or elſe if the words be literally taken, ſo as to ſignifie a ſubſtantial change, it is not of the *Wine*, but of the *Cup*; and that, not into the *bloud of Chriſt* but into the *new Teſtament* or *new Covenant* in his bloud. Beſides, that his bloud is ſaid *then* to be ſhed, and his body to be broken, which was not till his Paſſion, which followed the inſtitution and firſt celebration of this Sacrament.

But that there is no neceſſity to underſtand our Saviour's words in the ſenſe of *Tranſubſtantiation*, I will take the plain conceſſion of a great number of the moſt learned Writers of the Church of *Rome* in this Controverſie. (a) *Bellarmine*, (b) *Sua-*

(a) *de Euch. l.* 3. *c.* 23.

(b) *Suarez* and (c) *Vaſquez* do acknowledge *Scotus* the great *Schoolman* to have ſaid that this Doctrine cannot be evidently proved from Scripture: And *Bellarmine* grants this not to be improbable; and *Suarez* and *Vaſquez* acknowledge (d) *Durandus* to have ſaid as much. (e) *Ockham*, another famous Schoolman, ſays expreſly, that *the Doctrine which holds the ſubſtance of the Bread and Wine to remain after conſecration is neither repugnant to Reaſon nor to Scripture.* (f) *Petrus ab Alliaco* Cardinal of *Cambray* ſays plainly, that *the Doctrine of the Subſtance of Bread and Wine remaining after Conſecration is more eaſie and free from abſurdity, more rational, and no ways repugnant to the authority of Scripture*; nay more, that for the other Doctrine, *viz.* of *Tranſubſtantiation*, *there is no evidence in Scripture.* (g) *Gabriel Biel*, another great Schoolman and Divine of their Church, freely declares, that *as to any thing expreſs'd in the Canon of the Scriptures, a man may believe that the ſubſtance of Bread and Wine doth remain after Conſecration*: and therefore he reſolves the belief of *Tranſubſtantiation* into ſome other Revelation, beſides Scripture, which he ſuppoſeth the Church had about it. Cardi-

(b) *in 3. d. 49. Qu. 75. Sect. 2.*
(c) *in 3. part diſp. 180. Qu. 75. art. 2. c. 15.*
(d) *in Sent. l. 4. diſt. 11. Qu. 1. n. 15.*
(e) *in 4. Sent. Q. 5. & Quodl. 4. Q. 3.*
(f) *in 4. Sent. Q. 6. art. 2.*
(g) *in canon. Miſſ. Lect. 40.*

nal (h) *Cajetan* confeſſeth that *the Goſpel doth no where expreſs that the Bread is changed into the Body of Chriſt; that we have this from the authority of the Church:* nay, he goes farther, *that there is nothing in the Goſpel which enforceth any man to underſtand theſe words of Chriſt*, this is my body, *in a proper and not in a metaphorical ſenſe; but the Church having underſtood them in a proper ſenſe they are to be ſo explained*; Which words in the *Roman* Edition of *Cajetan* are expunged by order of Pope (i) *Pius* V. Cardinal (k) *Contarenus*, and (l) *Melchior Canus* one of the beſt and moſt judicious Writers that Church ever had, reckon this Doctrine among thoſe *which are not ſo expreſly found in Scripture.* I will add but one more, of great authority in the Church, and a reputed Martyr, (m) *Fiſher* Biſhop of *Rocheſter* who ingenuouſly confeſſeth that in the words of the Inſtitution *there is not one word from whence the true preſence of the fleſh and bloud of Chriſt in our Maſs can be proved:* So that we need not much contend that this Doctrine hath no certain foundation in Scripture, when this is ſo fully and frankly acknowledged by our Adverſaries themſelves.

(h) *in Aquin. 3. part. Qu. 75. art. 1.*

(i) *Ægid. Conink. de Sacram. Q. 75. art. 1. n. 13.*

(k) *de Sacram. l. 2. c. 3.*

(l) *Loc. Theolog. l. 3. c. 3.*

(m) *contra captiv. Babylon. c. 10. n. 2.*

Secondly,

Secondly, If there be no neceſſity of underſtanding our Saviour's words in the ſenſe of *Tranſubſtantiation*, I am ſure there is a great deal of reaſon to underſtand them otherwiſe. Whether we conſider the like expreſſions in Scripture; as where our Saviour ſays he is *the door*, and *the true Vine* (which the Church of *Rome* would mightily have triumph'd in, had it been ſaid, *this is my true body.*) And ſo likewiſe where the Church is ſaid to be *Chriſt's body*; and the *Rock which* followed the *Iſraelites* to be *Chriſt*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 4. *They drank of that Rock which followed them*, and *that Rock was Chriſt*: All which and innumerable more like expreſſions in Scripture every man underſtands in a figurative, and not in a ſtrictly literal and abſurd ſenſe. And it is very well known, that in the *Hebrew* Language things are commonly ſaid to be that which they do ſignifie and repreſent; and there is not in that Language a more proper and uſual way of expreſſing a thing to ſignifie ſo and ſo, than to ſay that it is ſo and ſo. Thus *Joſeph* expounding *Pharaoh*'s dream to him, *Gen.* 41. 26. ſays, *the ſeven good kine are ſeven years*, and *the ſeven good ears of corn are ſeven years*, that is, they ſignified or re-

presented seven years of plenty; and so *Pharaoh* understood him, and so would any man of sense understand the like expressions; nor do I believe that any sensible man, who had never heard of *Transubstantiation* being grounded upon these words of our Saviour, *this is my body*, would upon reading the institution of the Sacrament in the Gospel ever have imagin'd any such thing to be meant by our Saviour in those words; but would have understood his meaning to have been *this Bread* signifies my *Body*, *this Cup* signifies my *Blood*; and this which you see me now do, do ye hereafter for a *Memorial* of me: But surely it would never have enter'd into any men's mind to have thought that our Saviour did literally hold himself in his hands, and give away himself from himself with his own hands. Or whether we compare these words of our Saviour with the ancient Form of the Passover used by the Jews from Ezra's time, as (n) *Justin Martyr* tells us, τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν ἐστιν καὶ καταφυγὴ ἡμῶν, *this Passover is our Saviour and our refuge*; not that they believed the Paschal Lamb to be substantially changed either into God their Saviour who delivered them out of the Land of *Egypt*, or into

(n) *Dialog. cum* Tryp. *p.* 297. *Edit.* Paris. 1639.

into the *Meſſias* the Saviour whom they expected and who was ſignified by it: But this Lamb which they did eat did repreſent to them and put them in mind of that Salvation which God wrought for their Fathers in *Egypt*, when by the ſlaying of a Lamb and ſprinkling the bloud of it upon their doors their firſt-born were paſſed over and ſpared; and did likewiſe foreſhew the Salvation of the *Meſſias, the Lamb of God that was to take away the Sins of the world.*

And nothing is more common in all Languages than to give the name of the thing ſignified to the Sign. As the delivery of a Deed or Writing under Hand and Seal is call'd a conveyance or making over of ſuch an Eſtate, and it is really ſo; not the delivery of mere wax and parchment, but the conveyance of a real Eſtate; as truly and really to all effects and purpoſes of Law, as if the very material houſes and lands themſelves could be and were actually delivered into my hands: In like manner the names of the things themſelves made over to us in the new Covenant of the Goſpel between God and man, are given to the Signs or Seals of that Covenant. By *Baptiſm* Chriſtians are ſaid to be *made partakers of the*

Holy Ghoſt, *Heb.* 6. 4. And by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper we are ſaid to *communicate* or to be made partakers *of the Body of Chriſt* which was broken, and of his *Bloud* which was ſhed for us, that is, of the real benefits of his death and paſſion. And thus St. *Paul* ſpeaks of this Sacrament, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. *The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the bloud of Chriſt? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?* But ſtill it is bread, and he ſtill calls it ſo, v. 17. *For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are partakers of that one bread.* The Church of *Rome* might, if they pleaſed, as well argue from hence that all Chriſtians are ſubſtantially changed firſt into Bread, and then into the natural Body of Chriſt by their participation of the Sacrament, becauſe they are ſaid thereby to be *one bread and one body.* And the ſame Apoſtle in the next *Chapter*, after he had ſpoken of the conſecration of the Elements ſtill calls them the *Bread and the Cup*, in three *verſes* together, *As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup*, v. 26. *Whoſoever ſhall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily*, v. 27. *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of*

this

this bread and drink of that cup, v. 28. And our Saviour himſelf when he had ſaid, *this is my bloud of the new Teſtament*, immediately adds, * *but I ſay unto you, I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the Vine, untill I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom*, that is, not till after his reſurrection, which was the firſt ſtep of his exaltation into the Kingdom given him by his Father, when the Scripture tells us he did eat and drink with his Diſciples. But that which I obſerve from our Saviour's words is, that after the conſecration of the *Cup* and the delivering of it to his Diſciples to drink of it, he tells them that he would thenceforth drink no more of that fruit of the Vine, which he had now drank with them, till after his Reſurrection. From whence it is plain that it was the fruit of the Vine, real Wine, which our Saviour drank of and communicated to his Diſciples in the Sacrament.

* Matth. 26. 29.

Beſides, if we conſider that he celebrated this Sacrament before his Paſſion, it is impoſſible theſe words ſhould be underſtood literally of the natural body and bloud of Chriſt; becauſe it was *his body broken* and *his bloud ſhed* which he gave to his Diſciples, which if we underſtand lite-

literally of his natural body broken and his bloud ſhed, then theſe words, *this is my body which is broken, and this is my bloud which is ſhed*, could not be true, becauſe his body was then whole and unbroken, and his bloud not then ſhed; nor could it be a *propitiatory Sacrifice* (as they affirm this Sacrament to be) unleſs they will ſay that propitiation was made before Chriſt ſuffer'd: And it is likewiſe impoſſible that the Diſciples ſhould underſtand theſe words literally, becauſe they not onely plainly ſaw that what he gave them was *Bread* and *Wine*, but they ſaw likewiſe as plainly that it was not his Body which was given, but his Body which gave that which was given; not his body *broken* and his bloud *ſhed*, becauſe they ſaw him alive at that very time and beheld his body whole and unpierc'd; and therefore they could not underſtand theſe words literally: If they did, can we imagine that the Diſciples, who upon all other occaſions were ſo full of queſtions and objections, ſhould make no difficulty of this matter? nor ſo much as ask our Saviour, *how* can theſe things be? that they ſhould not tell him, we ſee this to be Bread and that to be Wine, and we ſee thy Body to be diſtinct from both;

we

we see thy Body not broken, and thy Bloud not shed.

From all which it must needs be very evident, to any man that will impartially consider things, how little reason there is to understand those words of our Saviour, *this is my body*, and *this is my bloud*, in the sense of *Transubstantiation*; nay on the contrary, that there is very great reason and an evident necessity to understand them otherwise. I proceed to shew,

2*ly*. That this Doctrine is not grounded upon the *perpetual belief of the Christian Church*, which the Church of *Rome* vainly pretends as an evidence that the Church did always understand and interpret our Saviour's words in this sense.

To manifest the groundlesness of this pretence, I shall 1. shew by plain testimony of the *Fathers* in several Ages, that this Doctrine was not the belief of the ancient Christian Church. 2. I shall shew the time and occasion of its coming in, and by what degrees it grew up and was establish'd in the *Roman* Church. 3. I shall answer their great pretended Demonstration that this always was and must have been the constant belief of the Christian Church.

1. I shall shew by plain Testimonies of the

the *Fathers* in ſeveral Ages, for above five hundred years after Chriſt, that this Doctrine was not the *belief of the ancient Chriſtian Church.* I deny not but that the *Fathers* do, and that with great reaſon, very much magnifie the wonderfull myſtery and efficacy of this Sacrament, and frequently ſpeak of a great Supernatural change made by the divine benediction; which we alſo readily acknowledge. They ſay indeed, that the Elements of Bread and Wine do by the divine bleſſing become to us the Body and Bloud of Chriſt: But they likewiſe ſay that the names of the things ſignified are given to the Signs; that the Bread and Wine do ſtill remain in their proper nature and ſubſtance, and that they are turn'd into the ſubſtance of our Bodies; that the Body of Chriſt in the Sacrament is not his natural Body, but the ſign and figure of it; not that Body which was crucified, nor that Bloud which was ſhed upon the Croſs; and that it is impious to underſtand the *eating of the fleſh of the Son of man* and *drinking his bloud* literally: all which are directly oppoſite to the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* and utterly inconſiſtent with it. I will ſelect but ſome few Teſtimonies of many things which I might bring to this purpoſe. I

I begin with *Juſtin Martyr*, who ſays expreſly, that * *our Bloud* and *Fleſh are nouriſhed* by the converſion *of that food* which we receive in the *Euchariſt*: But *that* cannot be the natural body and bloud of Chriſt, for no man will ſay that *that* is converted into the nouriſhment of our bodies. * *Apol.* 2. *p.* 98. *Edit.* Pariſ. 1636.

The *Second* is † *Irenæus*, who ſpeaking of this Sacrament ſays, that the *bread which is from the earth receiving the divine invocation is now no longer common bread, but the Euchariſt* (or Sacrament) *conſiſting of two things, the one earthly, the other heavenly.* He ſays it is no longer common bread, but after invocation or conſecration it becomes the Sacrament, that is, bread ſanctified, conſiſting of two things an earthly and a heavenly; the earthly thing is bread, and the heavenly is the divine bleſſing which by the invocation or conſecration is added to it. And * elſewhere he hath this paſſage, *when therefore the cup that is mix'd* (that is, of Wine and Water) *and the bread that is broken receives the word of God, it becomes the Euchariſt of the bloud and body of Chriſt, of which the ſubſtance of our fleſh is encreaſed and conſiſts*: but if that which we receive in the Sacrament do nouriſh our bodies, † *Lib.* 4. *c.* 34. * *Lib.* 5. *c.* 28.

dies, it must be bread and wine, and not the natural body and bloud of Christ. There is another remarkable Testimony of *Irenæus*, which though it be not now extant in those *works* of his which remain, yet hath been preserv'd by * *Oecumenius*, and it is this; when (says he) *the Greeks had taken some Servants, of the Christian Catechumeni* (that is, such as had not been admitted to the Sacrament) *and afterwards urged them by violence to tell them some of the secrets of the Christians, these Servants having nothing to say that might gratify those who offered violence to them, except onely that they had heard from their Masters that the divine Communion was the bloud and body of Christ, they thinking that it was really bloud and flesh, declar'd as much to those that questioned them. The Greeks taking this as if it were really done by the Christians, discovered it to others of the Greeks; who hereupon put* Sanctus *and* Blandina *to the torture to make them confess it.* To whom *Blandina* boldly answered, *How would they endure to do this, who by way of exercise* (or abstinence) *do not eat that flesh which may lawfully be eaten?* By which it appears that this which they would have charg'd upon *Christians*, as if they had literally eaten

* *Comment. in* 1 Pet. *c.* 3.

eaten the flesh and bloud of Christ in the Sacrament, was a false accusation which these Martyrs denied, saying they were so far from that that they for their part did not eat any flesh at all.

The next is *Tertullian*, who proves against *Marcion* the Heretique that the Body of our Saviour was not a mere phantasm and appearance, but a real Body, because the Sacrament is a figure and image of his Body; and if there be an image of his body he must have a real body, otherwise the Sacrament would be an image of an image. His words are these, * *The bread which our Saviour took and distributed to his Disciples he made his own body, saying this is my body, that is, the image or figure of my body. But it could not have been the figure of his body, if there had not been a true and real body.* And arguing against the *Scepticks* who denied the certainty of sense he useth this Argument: That if we question our senses we may doubt whether our Blessed Saviour were not deceived in what he heard, and saw, and touched. † *He might* (says he) *be deceived in the voice from heaven, in the smell of the ointment with which he was anointed against his burial, and in the taste of the wine which he consecrated*

* *Adverſ.* Marcionem. *l.* 4. *p.* 571. *Edit.* Rigal. Paris. 1634.

† *Lib. de Anima, p.* 319.

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* *Adverſ.* Marcionem. *l.* 4. *p.* 571. *Edit.* Rigal. Paris. 1634.

† *Lib. de Anima, p.* 319.

crated in remembrance of his bloud. So that it ſeems we are to truſt our ſenſes, even in the matter of the Sacrament: and if that be true, the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* is certainly falſe.

* *Edit.* Huetii.

Origen in his * Comment on *Matth.* 15. ſpeaking of the Sacrament hath this paſſage, *That food which is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer, as to that of it which is material, goeth into the belly and is caſt out into the draught*, which none ſurely will ſay of the Body of Chriſt. And afterwards he adds by way of explication, *it is not the matter of the bread, but the word which is ſpoken over it, which profiteth him that worthily eateth the Lord; and this* (he ſays) *he had ſpoken concerning the Typical and Symbolical body.* So that the matter of bread remaineth in the Sacrament, and this *Origen* calls the *Typical* and *Symbolical* body of Chriſt; and it is not the natural body of Chriſt which is there eaten, for the food eaten in the Sacrament, as to that of it which is material, goeth into the belly and is caſt out into the draught. This Teſtimony is ſo very plain in the Cauſe that *Sextus Senenſis* ſuſpects this place of *Origen* was depraved by the Heretiques. *Cardinal Perron* is contented to allow it to be *Origen*'s, but rejects his

his teſtimony becauſe he was accuſed of Hereſie by ſome of the Fathers, and ſays he talks like a Heretique in this place. So that with much ado this teſtimony is yielded to us. The ſame *Father* in his * *Homilies* upon *Leviticus* ſpeaks thus, * *Cap.* 10. *There is alſo in the New Teſtament a letter which kills him who doth not Spiritually underſtand thoſe things which are ſaid; for if we take according to the Letter that which is ſaid,* EXCEPT YE EAT MY FLESH AND DRINK MY BLOUD, *this Letter kills.* And this alſo is a killing Teſtimony, and not to be anſwered but in Cardinal *Perron*'s way, by ſaying *he talks like a Heretique.*

St. *Cyprian* hath a whole Epiſtle * to * *Ep.* 63. *Cecilius*, againſt thoſe who gave the Communion in Water only without Wine mingled with it; and his main argument againſt them is this, that *the bloud of Chriſt with which we are redeemed and quickned cannot ſeem to be in the Cup when there is no Wine in the Cup by which the Bloud of Chriſt is repreſented:* and afterwards he ſays, that *contrary to the Evangelical and Apoſtolical Doctrine water was in ſome places* offer'd (or given) *in the Lord's Cup, which* (ſays he) *alone cannot expreſs* (or repreſent) *the bloud of Chriſt.*

And laſtly he tells us, that *by Water* the people is underſtood, *by Wine the bloud of Chriſt is ſhewn* (or repreſented) *but when in the Cup water is mingled with Wine the people is united to Chriſt.* So that according to this Argument *Wine* in the Sacramental *Cup* is no otherwiſe changed into the *Bloud of Chriſt than the Water* mixed with it is changed into the *People*, which are ſaid to be *united to Chriſt.*

I omit many others, and paſs to St. *Auſtin* in the *fourth Age* after Chriſt. And I the rather inſiſt upon his Teſtimony, becauſe of his eminent eſteem and authority in the *Latin* Church; and he alſo calls the *Elements* of the Sacrament the *figure and ſign of Chriſt's body and bloud.* In his Book againſt *Adimantus* the *Manichee* we have this expreſſion, * *Our Lord did not doubt to ſay, this is my Body, when he gave the Sign of his Body.* And in his explication of the third *Pſalm*, ſpeaking of *Judas* whom our Lord admitted to *his* laſt Supper, *in which* (ſays he) † *he commended and delivered to his Diſciples the figure of his Body*; Language which would now be cenſur'd for Hereſie in the Church of *Rome.* Indeed he was never *accus'd of Hereſie*, as Cardinal *Perron* ſays *Origen* was, but *he talks as like* one as *Origen* himſelf. And in his *Comment*

* Aug. *Tom.* 6. *p.* 187. *Edit.* Baſil. 1596.

† *Enarrat. in* Pſal. *Tom.* 8. *p.* 16.

Comment on the 98. *Pſalm* ſpeaking of the offence which the Diſciples took at that ſaying of our Saviour, *Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man and drink his bloud, &c.* he brings in our Saviour ſpeaking thus to them, ‖ *Ye muſt underſtand Spiritually, what I have ſaid unto you; ye are not to eat this body which ye ſee, and to drink that bloud which ſhall be ſhed by thoſe that ſhall crucifie me. I have commended a certain Sacrament to you, which being Spiritually underſtood will give you life.* What more oppoſite to the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, than that the Diſciples were not to eat that Body of Chriſt which they ſaw, nor to drink that bloud which was ſhed upon the Croſs, but that all this was to be underſtood ſpiritually and according to the nature of a Sacrament? For *that body* he tells us is not here but in heaven, in his Comment upon theſe words, *Me ye have not always.* * *He ſpeaks* (ſays he) *of the preſence of his body: ye ſhall have me according to my providence, according to Majeſty and inviſible grace: but according to the fleſh which the word aſſumed, according to that which was born of the Virgin* Mary, *ye ſhall not have me: therefore becauſe he converſed with his Diſciples forty days, he is aſcended up into heaven, and is not here.*

‖ *Id. Tom. 9. p. 1105.*

* *Id Tract. 50. in Johan.*

† *Id. Tom. 2. p. 93.*

In his 23d. Epiſtle; † *If the Sacrament* (ſays he) *had not ſome reſemblance of thoſe things whereof they are Sacraments, they would not be Sacraments at all: but from this reſemblance they take for the moſt part the names of the things which they repreſent. Therefore as the Sacrament of the body of Chriſt is in ſome manner or ſenſe Chriſt's body, and the Sacrament of his bloud is the bloud of Chriſt; So the Sacrament of faith* (meaning *Baptiſm*) *is faith.* Upon which words of St. *Auſtin* there is this remarkable *Gloſs* in their own *Canon Law*; || *The heavenly Sacrament which truly repreſents the fleſh of Chriſt is called the body of Chriſt; but improperly: whence it is ſaid, that after a manner, but not according to the truth of the thing but the Myſtery of the thing ſignified; So that the meaning is, it is called the body of Chriſt, that is, it ſignifies the body of Chriſt:* And if this be St. *Auſtin's* meaning, I am ſure no *Proteſtant* can ſpeak more plainly againſt *Tranſubſtantiation.* And in the ancient *Canon* of the *Maſs*, before it was chang'd in compliance with this new Doctrine, it is expreſly call'd *a Sacrament, a Sign, an Image and a Figure of Chriſt's body.* To which I will add that remarkable paſſage of St. *Auſtin* cited by * *Gratian*, *That as we receive*

|| *De Conſecr. diſt. 2. Hoc eſt.*

* *De Conſecrat. diſt. 2. Sect. Utrum.*

ceive the ſimilitude of his death in Baptiſm, ſo we may alſo receive the likeneſs of his fleſh and bloud; that ſo neither may truth be wanting in the Sacrament, nor Pagans have occaſion to make us ridiculous for drinking the bloud of one that was ſlain.

I will mention but one Teſtimony more of this *Father*, but ſo clear a one as it is impoſſible any man in his wits that had believed *Tranſubſtantiation* could have utter'd. It is in his *Treatiſe* * *de Doctrina Chriſtiana*; where laying down ſeveral Rules for the right underſtanding of Scripture, he gives this for one. If (ſays he) *the ſpeech be a precept forbidding ſome heinous wickedneſs or crime, or commanding us to do good, it is not figurative; but if it ſeem to command any heinous wickedneſs or crime, or to forbid that which is profitable and beneficial to others, it is figurative. For example, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man and drink his bloud, ye have no life in you: This ſeems to command a heinous wickedneſs and crime, therefore it is a figure; commanding us to communicate of the paſſion of our Lord, and with delight and advantage to lay up in our memory that his fleſh was crucified and wounded for us.* So that, according to St. *Auſtin*'s beſt skill in interpreting Scripture, the *literal eating*

* *Lib.* 3. *Tom.* 3. *p.* 53.

of the flesh of Christ and drinking his bloud would have been a great impiety; and therefore the expression is to be understood *figuratively:* not as Cardinal *Perron* would have it, onely in opposition to the eating of his flesh and bloud in the gross appearance of flesh and bloud, but to the real eating of his natural body and bloud under any appearance whatsoever: For St. *Austin* doth not say, this is a Figurative speech wherein we are commanded really to feed upon the natural body and bloud of Christ under the *species* of bread and wine, as the *Cardinal* would understand him; for then the speech would be literal and not figurative: But he says, this is a figurative speech wherein we are commanded Spiritually to feed upon the remembrance of his Passion.

To these I will add but *three* or *four* Testimonies more in the *two* following Ages.

The first shall be of *Theodoret*, who speaking of that * Prophecy of *Jacob* concerning our Saviour, *he washed his garments in Wine and his clothes in the bloud of grapes*, hath these words, † *as we call the mystical fruit of the Vine* (that is, the Wine in the Sacrament) *after consecration the bloud of the Lord, so he* (viz. *Jacob*) *calls the bloud of the true Vine* (*viz.* of Christ)

* Gen. 49. 11.

† *Dialog.* 1.

Christ) *the bloud of the grape:* but the bloud of Christ is not literally and properly but onely figuratively the bloud of the grape, in the same sense as he is said to be the true Vine; and therefore the Wine in the Sacrament after consecration is in like manner not literally and properly but figuratively the bloud of Christ. And he explains this afterwards, saying, that *our Saviour changed the names, and gave to his Body the name of the Symbol or Sign, and to the Symbol or Sign the name of his Body; thus when he had call'd himself the Vine, he call'd the Symbol or Sign his bloud*; so that in the same sense that he call'd himself the Vine, he call'd the Wine, which is the Symbol of his bloud, his bloud: *For*, says he, *he would have those who partake of the divine mysteries not to attend to the nature of the things which are seen, but by the change of names to believe the change which is made by grace; for he who call'd that which by nature is a body wheat and bread, and again likewise call'd himself the Vine, he honour'd the Symbols with the name of his body and bloud: not changing nature but adding grace to nature.* Where you see he says expresly, that when he call'd the *Symbols* or Elements of the Sacrament, *viz. Bread and Wine* his *Body and Bloud*, he

made no change in the nature of the things, onely added grace to nature, that is, by the Divine grace and bleſſing he raiſed them to a Spiritual and Supernatural virtue and efficacy.

The *Second* is of the ſame *Theodoret* in his ſecond Dialogue between a *Catholique*, under the name of *Orthodoxus*, and an *Heretique* under the name of *Eraniſtes*; who maintaining that the Humanity of Chriſt was chang'd into the ſubſtance of the Divinity (which was the Hereſie of *Eutychees*) he illuſtrates the matter by this Similitude. *As*, ſays he, *the Symbols of the Lord's body and bloud are one thing before the invocation of the Prieſt, but after the invocation are changed and become another thing; So the body of our Lord after his aſcenſion is changed into the divine ſubſtance.* But what ſays the Catholique *Orthodoxus* to this? why, he talks juſt like one of Cardinal *Perron*'s Heretiques: *Thou art*, ſays he, *caught in thy own net; becauſe the myſtical Symbols after conſecration do not paſs out of their own nature: for they remain in their former ſubſtance, figure and appearance and may be ſeen and handled even as before.* He does not onely deny the outward figure and appearance of the Symbols to be chang'd, but the nature and ſub-

ſubſtance of them, even in the proper and ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word ſubſtance; and it was neceſſary ſo to do, otherwiſe he had not given a pertinent anſwer to the ſimilitude urg'd againſt him.

The next is one of their own Popes, *Gelaſius*, who brings the ſame Inſtance againſt the *Eutychians*; * *Surely*, ſays he, *the Sacraments which we receive of the body and bloud of our Lord are a divine thing, ſo that by them we are made partakers of a divine nature, and yet it ceaſeth not to be the ſubſtance or nature of Bread and Wine; and certainly the image and reſemblance of Chriſt's body and bloud are celebrated in the action of the myſteries*, that is, in the Sacrament. To make this Inſtance of any force againſt the *Eutychians*, who held that the body of Chriſt upon his aſcenſion ceas'd and was chang'd into the ſubſtance of his Divinity, it was neceſſary to deny that there was any ſubſtantial change in the Sacrament of the bread and wine into the body and bloud of Chriſt. So that here is an infallible authority, one of their own Popes expreſly againſt *Tranſubſtantiation*.

* *Biblioth. Patr. Tom.* 4.

The laſt Teſtimony I ſhall produce is of *Facundus* an *African* Biſhop, who lived in the 6th Century. Upon occaſion of juſtifying an expreſſion of one who had ſaid that

that *Christ also received the adoption of Sons*, he reasons thus. * *Christ vouchsafed to receive the Sacrament of adoption both when he was circumcised and baptized: And the Sacrament of Adoption may be called adoption, as the Sacrament of his body and bloud, which is in the consecrated bread and cup, is by us called his body and bloud: not that the bread*, says he, *is properly his body and the cup his bloud, but because they contain in them the mysteries of his body and bloud; hence also our Lord himself called the blessed bread and cup which he gave to his Disciples his body and bloud.* Can any man after this believe, that it was then, and had ever been, the universal and received Doctrine of the Christian Church, that the bread and wine in the Sacrament are substantially changed into the proper and natural body and bloud of Christ?

* Facund. p. 144. *edit.* Paris. 1676.

By these plain Testimonies which I have produced, and I might have brought a great many more to the same purpose, it is I think evident beyond all denial that *Transubstantiation* hath not been *the perpetual belief of the Christian Church.* And this likewise is acknowledged by many great and learned men of the *Roman Church.* (a) *Scotus* acknowledgeth, that this Doctrine was not always thought

(a) *In Sent. l.* 4. *Dist.* 11. *Q.* 3.

necessary

neceſſary to be believed, but that the neceſſity of believing it was conſequent to that Declaration of the Church made in the Council of *Lateran* under Pope *Innocent* the III. And (b) *Durandus* freely diſcovers his inclination *to have believed the contrary, if the Church had not by that determination obliged men to believe it.* (c) *Tonſtal* Biſhop of *Durham* alſo yields that *before the Lateran Council men were at liberty as to the manner of Chriſt's preſence in the Sacrament.* And (d) *Eraſmus*, who lived and died in the Communion of the *Roman* Church, and than whom no man was better read in the ancient *Fathers*, doth confeſs that it was *late before the Church defined Tranſubſtantiation, unknown to the Ancients both name and thing.* And (e) *Alphonſus a Caſtro* ſays plainly, that *concerning the Tranſubſtantiation of the bread into the body of Chriſt, there is ſeldom any mention in the ancient Writers.* And who can imagine that theſe learned men would have granted the ancient Church and Fathers to have been ſo much Strangers to this Doctrine, had they thought it to have been the perpetual belief of the Church? I ſhall now in the

(b) *In Sent. l. 4. diſt. 11. q. 1. n. 15.*

(c) *de Euchar. l. 1. p. 146.*

(d) *In 1. Epiſt. ad Corinth. c. 7. citante etiam* Salmerone, *Tom. 9. Tract. 16. p. 108.*

(e) *De Hæreſ. l. 8.*

Second place, give an account of the *particular time and occaſion of the coming*

in

in of this Doctrine, and by what ſteps and degrees it grew up and was advanced into an *Article* of Faith in the *Romiſh Church*. The Doctrine of the *corporal preſence of Chriſt* was firſt ſtarted upon occaſion of the Diſpute about the *Worſhip of Images*, in oppoſition whereto the *Synod* of *Conſtantinople* about the year DCCL did argue thus, That our Lord having left us no other image of himſelf but the Sacrament, in which the ſubſtance of bread is the image of his body, we ought to make no other image of our Lord. In anſwer to this Argument the ſecond *Council of Nice*, in the year DCCLXXXVII did declare, that the Sacrament after Conſecration *is not the image and antitype* of Chriſt's body and bloud, but is *properly* his body and bloud. So that the *corporal preſence of the body of Chriſt in the Sacrament* was firſt brought *in to ſupport the ſtupid Worſhip of Images*: And indeed it could never have come in upon a more proper occaſion, nor have been applied to a fitter purpoſe.

And here I cannot but take notice how well this agrees with * *Bellarmine*'s Obſervation, that *none of the Ancients who wrote of Hereſies, hath put this errour* (viz. of denying *Tranſubſtantiation*) *in his Catalogue; nor did any of the Ancients* diſ-

* *De Euchariſt. l. 1. c. 1.*

diſpute againſt this errour for the firſt 600 *years.* Which is very true, becauſe there could be no occaſion then to diſpute againſt thoſe who denied *Tranſubſtantiation*, ſince, as I have ſhewn, this Doctrine was not in being, unleſs among the *Eutychian* Heretiques, for the firſt 600 years and more. But † *Bellarmine* goes on and tells us, that the *firſt who call'd in queſtion the truth of the body of the Lord in the Euchariſt were the ICONOMACHI* (the oppoſers of Images) *after the year* DCC *in the Council of* Conſtantinople; *for theſe ſaid there was one Image of Chriſt inſtituted by Chriſt himſelf*, viz. *the bread and wine in the Euchariſt, which repreſents the body and bloud of Chriſt: Wherefore from that time the Greek Writers often admoniſh us that the Euchariſt is not the figure or image of the body of the Lord, but his true body, as appears from the* VII. *Synod*; which agrees moſt exactly with the account which I have given of the firſt riſe of this Doctrine, which began with the *corporal preſence of Chriſt* in the Sacrament, and afterwards proceeded to *Tranſubſtantiation.*

† *Ibid.*

And as this was the firſt occaſion of introducing this *Doctrine* among the *Greeks*, ſo in the *Latin* or *Roman* Church *Paſchaſius Radbertus*, firſt a *Monk*, and afterwards

terwards *Abbot* of *Corbey*, was the firſt broacher of it in the year DCCCXVIII.

And for this, beſides the Evidence of Hiſtory, we have the acknowledgment of *two* very Eminent Perſons in the Church of *Rome*, *Bellarmine* and *Sirmondus*, who do in effect confeſs that this *Paſchaſius* was the firſt who wrote to purpoſe upon this Argument. * *Bellarmine* in theſe words, *This Authour was the firſt who hath ſeriouſly and copiouſly written concerning the truth of Chriſt's body and bloud in the Euchariſt:* And † *Sirmondus* in theſe, *He ſo firſt explained the genuine ſenſe of the Catholique Church, that he opened the way to the reſt who afterwards in great numbers wrote upon the ſame Argument:* But though *Sirmondus* is pleaſed to ſay that he onely firſt explain'd the ſenſe of the Catholique Church in this Point, yet it is very plain from the Records of that Age which are left to us, that this was the firſt time that this Doctrine was broached in the *Latin* Church; and it met with great oppoſition in that Age, as I ſhall have occaſion hereafter to ſhew. For *Rabanus Maurus*, Arch-Biſhop of *Mentz*, about the year DCCCXLVII reciting the very words of *Paſchaſius* wherein he had deliver'd this Doctrine, hath this remarkable paſſage con-

* *De Scriptor. Eccleſ.*

† *In vita* Paſchaſii.

concerning the novelty of it; ‖ *Some*, ſays he, *of late, not having a right opinion concerning the Sacrament of the body and bloud of our Lord, have ſaid that this is the body and bloud of our Lord, which was born of the Virgin* Mary, *and in which our Lord ſuffered upon the Croſs and roſe from the dead: which errour*, ſays he, *we have oppos'd with all our might*. From whence it is plain, by the Teſtimony of one of the greateſt and moſt learned Biſhops of that Age, and of eminent reputation for Piety, that what is now the very Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* concerning the Sacrament, was then eſteem'd an Errour broach'd by ſome particular Perſons, but was far from being the generally receiv'd Doctrine of that Age. Can any one think it poſſible, that ſo Eminent a Perſon in the Church both for Piety and Learning, could have condemn'd this Doctrine as an Errour and a Novelty, had it been the general Doctrine of the Chriſtian Church, not onely in that but in all former Ages; and no cenſure paſs'd upon him for that which is now *the great burning Article* in the Church of *Rome*, and eſteemed by them one of the greateſt and moſt pernicious Hereſies?

‖ *Epiſt. ad* Heribaldum, *c.* 33.

Afterwards in the year MLIX, when *Berengarius* in *France* and *Germany* had rais'd

rais'd a freſh oppoſition againſt this Doctrine, he was compell'd to recant it by Pope *Nicholas* and the *Council at Rome*, in theſe words, * *That the Bread and Wine which are ſet upon the Altar, after the Conſecration are not onely the Sacrament, but the true body and bloud of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and are ſenſibly, not onely in the Sacrament, but in Truth, handled and broken by the hands of the Prieſt, and ground or bruiſed by the teeth of the faithfull.* But it ſeems the *Pope* and his *Council* were not then skilfull enough to expreſs themſelves rightly in this matter; for the *Gloſs* upon the *Canon Law* ſays expreſly, † *That unleſs we underſtand theſe words of* BERENGARIUS (that is in truth of the *Pope and his Council*) *in a ſound ſenſe, we ſhall fall into a greater Hereſie than that of* BERENGARIUS; *for we do not make parts of the Body of Chriſt.* The meaning of which *Gloſs* I cannot imagine, unleſs it be this, That the *Body of Chriſt*, though it be in truth *broken*, yet it is not *broken into parts*, (*for we do not make parts of the body of Chriſt*,) but into *wholes*: Now this new way of *breaking a Body*, not into *parts* but into *wholes*, (which in good earneſt is the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*) though to them that are able to believe *Tranſubſtantiation*

* Gratian. *de Conſecrat. diſtinct.* 2. Lanfranc. *de corp. & ſang. Domini. c.* 5. Guitmund. *de Sacram.* Alger. *de Sacram. l.* 1. *c.* 19.

† *Gloſs. Decret de conſecrat. diſt.* 2. *in cap. Ego Berengarius.*

ſtantiation it may for any thing I know appear to be *ſound ſenſe*, yet to us that cannot believe ſo, it appears to be *ſolid nonſenſe*.

About XX years after, in the year MLXXIX Pope *Gregory* the VIIth. began to be ſenſible of this abſurdity; and therefore in another *Council* at *Rome* made *Berengarius* to recant in another *Form*, viz. * *That the bread and wine which are placed upon the Altar, are ſubſtantially changed into the true and proper and quickning fleſh and bloud of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and after conſecration are the true body of Chriſt, which was born of the Virgin, and which being offered for the Salvation of the World did hang upon the Croſs, and ſits on the right hand of the Father.*

* *Waldenſ. Tom. 2. c. 13.*

So that from the firſt ſtarting of this Doctrine in the *ſecond Council of Nice* in the year DCCLXXXVII, till the *Council* under Pope *Gregory* the VIIth. in the year MLXXIX, it was almoſt three hundred years that this Doctrine was conteſted, and before this miſhapen *Monſter of Tranſubſtantiation could be lick'd* into that Form in which it is now ſetled and eſtabliſh'd in the Church of *Rome*. Here then is a plain account of the firſt riſe of this Doctrine, and of the ſeveral ſteps whereby it was advanced by the Church of *Rome*

into an *Article of Faith.* I come now in the

Third place, to anſwer the great pretended *Demonſtration* of the *impoſſibility that this Doctrine, if it had been new, ſhould ever have come in, in any Age, and been received in the Church; and conſequently it muſt of neceſſity have been the perpetual belief of the Church in all Ages:* For if it had not always been the Doctrine of the Church, whenever it had attempted firſt to come in there would have been a great ſtir and buſtle about it, and the whole Chriſtian World would have roſe up in oppoſition to it. But *we* can ſhew no ſuch time when firſt it came in, and when any ſuch oppoſition was made to it, and therefore it was always the Doctrine of the Church. This *Demonſtration* Monſieur *Arnauld*, a very learned Man in *France*, pretends to be unanſwerable: whether it be ſo or not, I ſhall briefly examine. And,

Firſt, We do aſſign a punctual and very likely time of the firſt riſe of this Doctrine, about the beginning of the *ninth* Age; though it did not take firm root nor was fully ſetled and eſtabliſh'd till towards the end of the *eleventh.* And this was the moſt likely time of all other, from the

the beginning of Christianity, for so gross an Errour to appear; it being, by the confession and consent of their own *Historians*, the most dark and dismal time that ever happened to the Christian Church, both for *Ignorance*, and *Superstition*, and *Vice*. It came in together with *Idolatry*, and was made use of to support it: A fit prop and companion for it. And indeed what *tares* might not the Enemy have *sown* in so dark and long a *Night*; when so considerable a part of the Christian World was lull'd asleep in profound Ignorance and Superstition? And this agrees very well with the account which our *Saviour* himself gives in the *Parable* of the *Tares*, of the springing up of Errours and Corruptions in the Field of the Church. * *While the men slept* the Enemy did his work in the Night, so that when they were awake they wondred how and whence the *tares* came; but being sure they were there, and that they were not sown at first, they concluded *the Enemy had done it*. * Matth. 13. 24.

Secondly, I have shewn likewise that there was *considerable opposition* made to this *Errour* at its first coming in. The general Ignorance and gross Superstition of that Age rendered the generality of people more quiet and secure, and dispo-

ſed them to receive any thing that came under a pretence of myſtery in Religion, and of greater reverence and devotion to the Sacrament, and that ſeemed any way to countenance the worſhip of *Images*, for which at that time they were zealouſly concern'd. But notwithſtanding the ſecurity and paſſive temper of the People, the men moſt eminent for piety and learning in that Time made great reſiſtance againſt it. I have already named *Rabanus* Arch-Biſhop of *Mentz*, who oppos'd it as an Errour lately ſprung up, and which had then gained but upon ſome few perſons. To whom I may add *Heribaldus* Biſhop of *Auxerres* in *France*, *Io. Scotus*, *Erigena*, and *Ratramnus*, commonly known by the name of *Bertram*, who at the ſame time were employed by the Emperour *Charles* the *Bald* to oppoſe this growing Errour, and wrote learnedly againſt it. And theſe were the eminent men for learning in that time. And becauſe Monſieur *Arnauld* will not be ſatisfied unleſs there were ſome ſtir and buſtle about it, *Bertram* in his *Preface* to his Book tells us, that they *who according to their ſeveral opinions talked differently about the myſtery of Chriſt's body and bloud were divided by no ſmall Schiſm.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Though for a more clear and ſatisfactory anſwer to this pretended *Demonſtration* I have been contented to untie this knot, yet I could without all theſe pains have cut it. For ſuppoſe this Doctrine had ſilently come in and without oppoſition, ſo that we could not aſſign the particular time and occaſion of its firſt Riſe; yet if it be evident from the Records of former Ages, for above D. years together, that this was not the ancient belief of the Church; and plain alſo, that this Doctrine was afterwards received in the *Roman* Church, though we could not tell how and when it came in, yet it would be the wildeſt and moſt extravagant thing in the world to ſet up a pretended Demonſtration of Reaſon againſt plain Experience and matter of Fact. This is juſt *Zeno*'s Demonſtration of the impoſſibility of motion againſt *Diogenes* walking before his Eyes. For this is to undertake to prove that impoſſible to have been, which moſt certainly was. Juſt thus the *Servants* in the *Parable* might have demonſtrated that the *tares* were *wheat*, becauſe they were ſure none but good ſeed was ſown at firſt, and no man could give any account of the punctual time when any *tares* were

ſown, or by whom; and if an Enemy had come to do it, he muſt needs have met with great reſiſtance and oppoſition; but no ſuch reſiſtance was made, and therefore there could be no *tares* in the *field*, but that which they call'd *tares* was certainly *good wheat*. At the ſame rate a man might demonſtrate that *our King*, his *Majeſty of Great Britain*, is not return'd into *England*, nor reſtor'd to his Crown; becauſe there being ſo great and powerfull an Army poſſeſs'd of his Lands, and therefore obliged by intereſt to keep him out, it was impoſſible he ſhould ever come in without a great deal of fighting and bloudſhed: but there was no ſuch thing, therefore he is not return'd and reſtor'd to his Crown. And by the like kind of Demonſtration one might prove that the *Turk* did not invade *Chriſtendom* laſt year, and beſiege *Vienna*; becauſe if he had, the moſt *Chriſtian King*, who had the greateſt Army in *Chriſtendom* in a readineſs, would certainly have employed it againſt him; but Monſieur *Arnauld* certainly knows no ſuch thing was done: And therefore according to his way of Demonſtration, the *matter of fact*, ſo commonly reported and believed, concerning the

the *Turk's Invaſion of Chriſtendom* and *beſieging Vienna* laſt year, was a perfect miſtake. But a man may demonſtrate till his head and heart ake, before he ſhall ever be able to prove that which certainly is, or was, never to have been. For of all ſorts of impoſſibles nothing is more evidently ſo, than to make that which hath been not to have been. All the reaſon in the world is too weak to cope with ſo tough and obſtinate a difficulty. And I have often wonder'd how a man of Monſieur *Arnauld*'s great wit and ſharp Judgment could prevail with himſelf to engage in ſo bad and baffled a Cauſe; or could think to defend it with ſo *wooden a Dagger* as his *Demonſtration* of *Reaſon*, againſt certain *Experience* and *matter of Fact*: A thing, if it be poſſible, of equal abſurdity with what he pretends to demonſtrate, *Tranſubſtantiation* it ſelf. I proceed to the

Third pretended Ground of this Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*; and that is, *The Infallible Authority of the preſent Church to make and declare new Articles of Faith.* And this in truth is the ground into which the moſt of the learned men of their Church did heretofore, and many do ſtill reſolve their belief of

this Doctrine: And, as I have already ſhewn, do plainly ſay that they ſee no ſufficient reaſon, either from *Scripture* or *Tradition*, for the belief of it: And that they ſhould have believed the contrary had not the determination of the Church obliged them otherwiſe.

But if this Doctrine be obtruded upon the world merely by virtue of the Authority of the *Roman* Church, and the Declaration of the *Council* under Pope *Gregory* the VIIth. or of the *Lateran Council* under *Innocent* the III^d^. then it is a plain Innovation in the Chriſtian Doctrine, and a new Article of Faith impos'd upon the Chriſtian World. And if any Church hath this power, the Chriſtian Faith may be enlarged and changed as often as men pleaſe; and that which is no part of our Saviour's Doctrine, nay, any thing, though never ſo abſurd and unreaſonable, may become an Article of Faith, obliging all Chriſtians to the belief of it, whenever the Church of *Rome* ſhall think fit to ſtamp her Authority upon it: which would make Chriſtianity a moſt uncertain and endleſs thing.

The *Fourth* pretended ground of this Doctrine is, *the neceſſity of ſuch a change as this in the Sacrament to the comfort and benefit*

benefit of those who receive it. But there is no colour for this, if the thing be rightly consider'd: Because the comfort and benefit of the Sacrament depends upon the blessing annexed to the Institution. And as *Water* in *Baptism*, without any substantial change made in that Element, may by the Divine blessing accompanying the Institution be effectual to the washing away of Sin, and Spiritual Regeneration; So there can no reason in the world be given why the Elements of *Bread* and *Wine* in the *Lord's Supper* may not, by the same Divine blessing accompanying this Institution, make the worthy receivers partakers of all the Spiritual comfort and benefit designed to us thereby without any substantial change made in those Elements, since our Lord hath told us, that *verily the flesh profiteth nothing.* So that if we could do so odd and strange a thing as to eat the very natural flesh and drink the bloud of our Lord, I do not see of what greater advantage it would be to us than what we may have by partaking of the Symbols of his body and bloud as he hath appointed *in remembrance of him.* For the Spiritual efficacy of the Sacrament doth not depend upon the nature of the thing received,

ceived, ſuppoſing we receive what our Lord appointed, and receive it with a right preparation and diſpoſition of mind, but upon the ſupernatural bleſſing that goes along with it, and makes it effectual to thoſe ſpiritual ends for which it was appointed.

The *Fifth* and laſt pretended ground of this Doctrine is, *to magnifie the power of the Prieſt in being able to work ſo great a Miracle.* And this with great pride and pomp is often urg'd by them as a tranſcendent inſtance of the Divine Wiſedom, to find out ſo admirable a way to raiſe the power and reverence of the Prieſt; that he ſhould be able every day, and as often as he pleaſes, by repeating a few words to work ſo miraculous a change, and (as they love moſt abſurdly and blaſphemouſly to ſpeak) *to make God himſelf.*

But this is to pretend to a power above that of God himſelf, for he did not, nor cannot make himſelf, nor do any thing that implies a contradiction, as *Tranſubſtantiation* evidently does in their pretending *to make God.* For to make that which already is, and to make that *now* which *always* was, is not onely vain and trifling if it could be done, but impoſſible becauſe it implies a contradiction.

And

And what if after all *Transubstantiation*, if it were possible and actually wrought by the Priest, would yet be no Miracle? For there are two things necessary to a Miracle, that there be a supernatural effect wrought, and that this effect be evident to sense. So that though a supernatural effect be wrought, yet if it be not evident to sense, it is to all the ends and purposes of a Miracle as if it were not; and can be no testimony or proof of any thing, because it self stands in need of another Miracle to give testimony to it, and to prove that it was wrought. And neither in Scripture, nor in profane Authours, nor in common use of speech, is any thing call'd a Miracle but what falls under the notice of our senses: A *Miracle* being nothing else but *a supernatural effect evident to sense*, the great end and design whereof is to be a sensible proof and conviction to us of something that we do not see.

And for want of this Condition, *Transubstantiation*, if it were true, would be no Miracle. It would indeed be very *supernatural*, but for all that it would not be a *Sign* or *Miracle*: For a Sign or Miracle is always a thing sensible, otherwise it could be no Sign. Now that such

a change

a change as is pretended in *Tranſubſtantiation* ſhould really be wrought, and yet there ſhould be no ſign and appearance of it, is a thing very wonderfull, but not to ſenſe; for our ſenſes perceive no change, the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament to all our ſenſes remaining juſt as they were before: And that a thing ſhould remain to all appearance juſt as it was, hath nothing at all of wonder in it: we wonder indeed when we ſee a ſtrange thing done, but no man wonders when he ſees nothing done. So that *Tranſubſtantiation*, if they will needs have it a Miracle, is ſuch a Miracle as any man may work that hath but the confidence to face men down that he works it, and the fortune to be believed: And though the Church of *Rome* may magnify their Prieſts upon account of this Miracle, which they ſay they can work every day and every hour, yet I cannot underſtand the reaſon of it; for when this great work (as they call it) is done, there is nothing more appears to be done than if there were no Miracle: Now ſuch a Miracle as to all appearance is no Miracle, I ſee no reaſon why a Proteſtant Miniſter, as well as a Popiſh Prieſt, may not work as often as he pleaſes; or if he can but have the patience

to

to let it alone, it will work it ſelf. For ſurely nothing in the world is eaſier than to let a thing be as it is, and by ſpeaking a few words over it to make it juſt what it was before. Every man, every day, may work ten thouſand ſuch Miracles.

And thus I have diſpatch'd the *Firſt* part of my Diſcourſe, which was to conſider the pretended grounds and *Reaſons* of the Church of *Rome* for this Doctrine, and to ſhew the weakneſs and inſufficiency of them. I come in the

SECOND place, to produce our *Objections* againſt it. Which will be of ſo much the greater force, becauſe I have already ſhewn this Doctrine to be deſtitute of all Divine warrant and authority, and of any other ſort of Ground ſufficient in reaſon to juſtify it. So that I do not now object againſt a Doctrine which hath a fair probability of Divine Revelation on its ſide, for that would weigh down all objections, which did not plainly overthrow the probability and credit of its Divine Revelation: But I object againſt a Doctrine by the mere Will and Tyranny of men impos'd upon the belief of Chriſtians, without *any* evidence of *Scripture*, and againſt all the evidence of *Reaſon* and *Senſe*. II.

The

The Objection I ſhall reduce to theſe *two* Heads. *Firſt*, The infinite ſcandal of this Doctrine to the Chriſtian Religion. And *Secondly*, The monſtrous and inſupportable abſurdity of it.

Firſt, *The infinite ſcandal of this Doctrine to the Chriſtian Religion.* And that upon theſe *four* accounts. 1. Of the ſtupidity of this Doctrine. 2. The real barbarouſneſs of this Sacrament and Rite of our Religion upon ſuppoſition of the truth of this Doctrine. 3. Of the cruel and bloudy conſequences of it. 4. Of the danger of Idolatry; which they are certainly guilty of, if this Doctrine be not true.

1. Upon account of *the ſtupidity of this Doctrine.* I remember that *Tully*, who was a man of very good ſenſe, inſtanceth in the conceit of *eating God* as the extremity of madneſs, and ſo ſtupid an apprehenſion as he thought no man was ever guilty of. * *When we call*, ſays he, *the fruits of the earth Ceres, and wine Bacchus, we uſe but the common language; but do you think any man ſo mad as to believe that which he eats to be God?* It ſeems he could not believe that ſo extravagant a folly had ever entred into the mind of man. It is a very ſevere ſaying of *Averroes* the *Arabian* Philoſopher (who lived after this Doctrine

* *De Nat. Deorum. l.* 3.

trine was entertained among *Chriſtians*) and ought to make the Church of *Rome* bluſh, if ſhe can; *I have travell'd*, ſays he, *over the World, and have found divers* Sects; *but ſo ſottiſh a* Sect *or Law I never found, as is the* Sect *of the* Chriſtians; *becauſe with their own teeth they devour their God whom they worſhip.* It was great ſtupidity in the People of *Iſrael* to ſay, *Come let us make us Gods*; but it was civilly ſaid of them, *Let us make us Gods that may go before us*, in compariſon of the Church of *Rome*, who ſay, *Let us make a God that we may eat him.* So that upon the whole matter I cannot but wonder that they ſhould chuſe thus to expoſe Faith to the contempt of all that are endued with Reaſon. And to ſpeak the plain truth, the Chriſtian Religion was never ſo horribly expoſed to the ſcorn of Atheiſts and Infidels, as it hath been by this moſt abſurd and ſenſeleſs Doctrine. But thus it was foretold that † *the Man of Sin* ſhould come *with Power and Signs and Lying Miracles, and with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs*, with all the *Legerdemain* and *jugling* tricks of falſhood and impoſture; amongſt which this of *Tranſubſtantiation*, which they call a *Miracle*, and we a *Cheat*, is one of the chief: And in all probability thoſe

* Dionyſ. Carthuſ. *in* 4. *diſt.* 10. *art.* 1.

† 2 Theſſ. 2. 10.

thoſe common *jugling* words of *hocus pocus*, are nothing elſe but a corruption of *hoc eſt corpus*, by way of ridiculous imitation of the Prieſts of the Church of *Rome* in their *trick* of *Tranſubſtantiation*. Into ſuch contempt by this fooliſh Doctrine and pretended Miracle of theirs have they brought the moſt ſacred and venerable Myſtery of our Religion.

2. It is very ſcandalous likewiſe upon account of the real *barbarouſneſs* of this Sacrament and Rite of our Religion, upon ſuppoſition of the truth of this Doctrine. Literally to *eat the fleſh of the Son of man and to drink his bloud*, St. *Auſtin*, as I have ſhewed before, declares to be a great *Impiety*. And the impiety and barbarouſneſs of the thing is not in truth extenuated, but onely the appearance of it, by its being done under the *Species of Bread and Wine*: For the thing they acknowledge is really done, and they believe that they verily eat and drink the natural fleſh and bloud of Chriſt. And what can any man do more unworthily towards his Friend? How can he poſſibly uſe him more barbarouſly, than to feaſt upon his living fleſh and bloud? It is one of the greateſt wonders in the world, that it ſhould ever enter into the minds of men to put upon

our

our Saviour's words, ſo eaſily capable of a more convenient ſenſe, and ſo neceſſarily requiring it, a meaning ſo plainly contrary to Reaſon, and Senſe, and even to Humanity it ſelf. Had the ancient Chriſtians owned any ſuch Doctrine, we ſhould have heard of it from the Adverſaries of our Religion in every page of their Writings; and they would have deſired no greater advantage againſt the Chriſtians than to have been able to hit them in the teeth with their feaſting upon the natural fleſh and bloud of their Lord, and their God, and their beſt Friend. What endleſs triumphs would they have made upon this Subject? And with what confidence would they have ſet the cruelty uſed by Chriſtians in their *Sacrament*, againſt their God *Saturn*'s eating his own Children, and all the cruel and bloudy Rites of their Idolatry? But that no ſuch thing was then objected by the *Heathens* to the *Chriſtians*, is to a wiſe man inſtead of a thouſand Demonſtrations that no ſuch Doctrine was then believed.

3. It is ſcandalous alſo upon account of the *cruel and bloudy conſequences* of this Doctrine; ſo contrary to the plain Laws of Chriſtianity, and to one great end and deſign of this Sacrament, which is

to unite Chriſtians in the moſt perfect love and charity to one another: Whereas this Doctrine hath been the occaſion of the moſt barbarous and bloudy Tragedies that ever were acted in the World. For this hath been in the Church of *Rome* the great *burning Article*: and as abſurd and unreaſonable as it is, more Chriſtians have been murthered for the denial of it than perhaps for all the other Articles of their Religion. And I think it may generally paſs for a true obſervation, That all Sects are commonly moſt hot and furious for thoſe things for which there is leaſt reaſon; for what men want of Reaſon for their opinions, they uſually ſupply and make up in Rage. And it was no more than needed to uſe this ſeverity upon this occaſion; for nothing but the cruel fear of death could in probability have driven ſo great a part of mankind into the acknowledgment of ſo unreaſonable and ſenſleſs a Doctrine.

O Bleſſed Saviour! thou beſt Friend and greateſt Lover of mankind, who can imagine thou didſt ever intend that men ſhould kill one another for not being able to believe contrary to their ſenſes; for being unwilling to think, that thou ſhouldſt make one of the moſt horrid and barba-

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rous things that can be imagin'd a main Duty and principal Myſtery of thy Religion; for not flattering the pride and preſumption of the Prieſt who ſays he can make God, and for not complying with the folly and ſtupidity of the People who are made to believe that they can eat him?

4. Upon account of the danger of *Idolatry*; which they are certainly guilty of if this Doctrine be not true, and ſuch a change as they pretend be not made in the Sacrament; for if it be not, then they worſhip a Creature inſtead of the Creatour God bleſſed for ever. But ſuch a change I have ſhewn to be impoſſible; or if it could be, yet they can never be certain that it is, and conſequently are always in danger of Idolatry; and that they can never be certain that ſuch a change is made, is evident; becauſe, according to the expreſs determination of the Council of *Trent*, that depends upon the mind and *intention of the Prieſt*, which cannot certainly be known but by Revelation, which is not pretended in this caſe. And if they be miſtaken about this change, through the knavery or croſſneſs of the Prieſt who will not *make God* but when he thinks fit, they muſt not think to excuſe themſelves

from Idolatry becauſe they intended to worſhip God and not a Creature; for ſo the *Perſians* might be excus'd from Idolatry in worſhipping the *Sun*, becauſe they intend to worſhip God and not a Creature; and ſo indeed we may excuſe all the Idolatry that ever was in the World, which is nothing elſe but a miſtake of the Deity, and upon that miſtake a worſhipping of ſomething as God which is not God.

II. Beſides the infinite ſcandal of this Doctrine upon the accounts I have mentioned, *the monſtrous abſurdities* of it make it inſupportable to any Religion. I am very well aſſur'd of the grounds of Religion in general, and of the Chriſtian Religion in particular; and yet I cannot ſee that the foundations of any revealed Religion, are ſtrong enough to bear the weight of ſo many and ſo great abſurdities as this Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* would load it withall. And to make this evident, I ſhall not inſiſt upon thoſe groſs contradictions, of the ſame Body being in ſo many ſeveral places at once; of our Saviour's giving away himſelf with his own hands to every one of his Diſciples, and yet ſtill keeping himſelf to himſelf; and a thouſand more of the like nature:

ture: but to ſhew the abſurdity of this Doctrine, I ſhall only ask theſe few Queſtions.

1. Whether any man have, or ever had greater evidence of the truth of any Divine Revelation than any man hath of the falſhood of *Tranſubſtantiation*? Infidelity were hardly poſſible to men, if all men had the ſame evidence for the Chriſtian Religion which they have againſt *Tranſubſtantiation*, that is, the clear and irreſiſtible evidence of ſenſe. He that can once be brought to contradict or deny his ſenſes, is at an end of certainty; for what can a man be certain of if he be not certain of what he ſees? In ſome circumſtances our ſenſes may deceive us, but no Faculty deceives us ſo little and ſo ſeldom: And when our ſenſes do deceive us, even that errour is not to be corrected without the help of our ſenſes.

2. Suppoſing this Doctrine had been delivered in Scripture in the very ſame words that it is decreed in the Council of *Trent*, by what clearer evidence or ſtronger Argument could any man prove to me that ſuch words were in the Bible than I can prove to him that bread and wine after conſecration are bread and wine ſtill? He could but appeal to my eyes to

prove ſuch words to be in the Bible, and with the ſame reaſon and juſtice might I appeal to ſeveral of his ſenſes to prove to him that the bread and wine after conſecration are bread and wine ſtill.

3. Whether it be reaſonable to imagine that God ſhould make that a part of the Chriſtian Religion which ſhakes the main external evidence and confirmation of the whole? I mean the Miracles which were wrought by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, the aſſurance whereof did at firſt depend upon the certainty of ſenſe. For if the ſenſes of thoſe who ſay they ſaw them were deceived, then there might be no Miracles wrought; and conſequently it may juſtly be doubted whether that kind of confirmation which God hath given to the Chriſtian Religion would be ſtrong enough to prove it, ſuppoſing *Tranſubſtantiation* to be a part of it: Becauſe every man hath as great evidence that *Tranſubſtantiation* is falſe, as he hath that the Chriſtian Religion is true. Suppoſe then *Tranſubſtantiation* to be part of the Chriſtian Doctrine, it muſt have the ſame confirmation with the whole, and that is Miracles: But of all Doctrines in the world it is peculiarly incapable of being proved by a Miracle. For if a Miracle were

were wrought for the proof of it, the very ſame aſſurance which any man hath of the truth of the Miracle he hath of the falſhood of the Doctrine, that is, the clear evidence of his Senſes. For that there is a Miracle wrought to prove *that what he ſees in the Sacrament is not bread but the body of Chriſt*, there is onely the evidence of ſenſe; and there is the very ſame evidence to prove *that what he ſees in the Sacrament is not the body of Chriſt but bread.* So that here would ariſe a new Controverſie, whether a man ſhould rather believe his Senſes giving teſtimony againſt the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, or bearing witneſs to a Miracle wrought to confirm that Doctrine; there being the very ſame evidence againſt the truth of the Doctrine, which there is for the truth of the Miracle: And then the Argument for *Tranſubſtantiation* and the Objection againſt it would juſt ballance one another; and conſequently *Tranſubſtantiation* is not to be proved by a Miracle, becauſe that would be, *to prove to a man by ſome thing that he ſees, that he doth not ſee what he ſees.* And if there were no other evidence that *Tranſubſtantiation* is no part of the Chriſtian Doctrine, this would be ſufficient, that what proves the one doth

as much overthrow the other; and that Miracles which are certainly the beſt and higheſt external proof of Chriſtianity are the worſt proof in the world of *Tranſubſtantiation*, unleſs a man can renounce his ſenſes at the ſame time that he relies upon them. For a man cannot believe a Miracle without relying upon ſenſe, nor *Tranſubſtantiation* without renouncing it. So that never were any two things ſo ill coupled together as the Doctrine of Chriſtianity and that of *Tranſubſtantiation*, becauſe they draw ſeveral ways, and are ready to ſtrangle one another: For the main evidence of the Chriſtian Doctrine, which is Miracles, is reſolved into the certainty of ſenſe, but this evidence is clear and point-blank againſt *Tranſubſtantiation*.

4. And *Laſtly*, I would ask what we are to think of the Argument which our Saviour uſed to convince his Diſciples after his Reſurrection that his Body was really riſen, and that they were not deluded by a Ghoſt or Apparition? Is it a neceſſary and concluſive Argument or not?

*Luke 24. 38, 39. * *And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my ſelf; for a Spirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have.* But now if we

we ſuppoſe with the Church of *Rome* the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* to be true, and that he had inſtructed his Diſciples in it juſt before his death, ſtrange thoughts might juſtly have riſen in their hearts, and they might have ſaid to him; Lord, it is but a few days ago ſince thou didſt teach us not to believe our ſenſes, but directly contrary to what we ſaw, *viz.* that the bread which thou gaveſt us in the Sacrament, though we ſaw it and handled it and taſted it to be bread, yet was not bread, but thine own natural body; and now thou appealeſt to our ſenſes to prove that this is thy body which we now ſee. If ſeeing and handling be an unqueſtionable evidence that things are what they appear to our ſenſes, then we were deceived before in the Sacrament; and if they be not, then we are not ſure now that this is thy body which we now ſee and handle, but it may be perhaps bread under the appearance of fleſh and bones; juſt as in the Sacrament, that which we ſaw and handled and taſted to be bread was thy fleſh and bones under the form and appearance of bread. Now upon this ſuppoſition it would have been a hard matter to have quieted the thoughts of the Diſciples: For if the Argument which

which our Saviour uſed did certainly prove to them that what they ſaw and handled was his body, his very natural fleſh and bones, becauſe they ſaw and handled them, (which it were impious to deny) it would as ſtrongly prove that what they ſaw and received before in the Sacrament was not the natural body and bloud of *Chriſt*, but real bread and wine: And conſequently, that according to our Saviour's arguing after his Reſurrection they had no reaſon to believe *Tranſubſtantiation* before. For that very Argument by which our Saviour proves the reality of his body after his Reſurrection doth as ſtrongly prove the reality of bread and wine after Conſecration. But our Saviour's Argument was moſt infallibly good and true, and therefore the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* is undoubtedly falſe.

Upon the whole matter I ſhall onely ſay this, that ſome other Points between us and the Church of *Rome* are managed with ſome kind of wit and ſubtilty, but this of *Tranſubſtantiation* is carried out by mere dint of impudence and facing down of Mankind.

And of this the more diſcerning perſons of that Church are of late grown ſo ſenſible that they would now be glad to be

be rid of this odious and ridiculous Doctrine. But the Council of *Trent* hath rivetted it ſo faſt into their Religion, and made it ſo neceſſary and eſſential a Point of their belief, that they cannot now part with it if they would; it is like a Mill-ſtone hung about the neck of Popery, which will ſink it at the laſt.

And though ſome of their greateſt Wits, as Cardinal *Perron*, and of late Monſieur *Arnauld*, have undertaken the defence of it in great Volumes; yet it is an abſurdity of that monſtrous and maſſy weight, that no humane authority or wit are able to ſupport it: It will make the very Pillars of St. *Peter*'s crack, and requires more Volumes to make it good than would fill the *Vatican*.

And now I would apply my ſelf to the poor deluded People of that Church, if they were either permitted by their Prieſts, or durſt venture without their leave, to look into their Religion and to examine the Doctrines of it. *Conſider, and ſhew your ſelves men.* Do not ſuffer your ſelves any longer to be led blindfold, and by an implicit Faith in your Prieſts, into the belief of nonſenſe and contradiction. Think it enough and too much to let them rook you of your money

ney for pretended Pardons and counterfeit Reliques, but let not the Authority of any Prieſt or Church perſuade you out of your Senſes. Credulity is certainly a fault as well as Infidelity: and he who ſaid, *Bleſſed are they that have not ſeen and yet have believed*; hath no where ſaid, *Bleſſed are they that have ſeen and yet have not believed*; much leſs, *Bleſſed are they that believe directly contrary to what they ſee.*

To conclude this Diſcourſe. By what hath been ſaid upon this Argument it will appear, with how little truth, and reaſon, and regard to the intereſt of our common Chriſtianity, it is ſo often ſaid by our Adverſaries, that there are as good Arguments for the belief of *Tranſubſtantiation* as of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*: When they themſelves do acknowledge with us that the Doctrine of the *Trinity* is grounded upon the Scriptures, and that according to the interpretation of them by the conſent of the ancient Fathers: But their Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* I have plainly ſhewn to have no ſuch ground, and that this is acknowledged by very many learned men of their own Church. And this Doctrine of theirs being firſt plainly proved by us to be deſtitute of all Divine Warrant and Authority,

thority, our Objections againſt it from the manifold contradictions of it to Reaſon and Senſe are ſo many Demonſtrations of the falſhood of it. Againſt all which they have nothing to put in the oppoſite Scale but the Infallibility of their Church, for which there is even leſs colour of proof from Scripture than for *Tranſubſtantiation* it ſelf. But ſo fond are they of their own Innovations and Errours, that rather than the Dictates of their Church, how groundleſs and abſurd ſoever, ſhould be call'd in queſtion; rather than not have their will of us in impoſing upon us what they pleaſe, they will overthrow any Article of the Chriſtian Faith, and ſhake the very foundations of our common Religion: A clear evidence that the Church of *Rome* is not the true Mother, ſince ſhe can be ſo well contented that Chriſtianity ſhould be deſtroyed rather than the Point in queſtion ſhould be decided againſt her.

THE

THE Protestant Religion

Vindicated, from the Charge of

Singularity and *Novelty*:

IN A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

At *WHITE-HALL*,
April the 2*d*. 1680.

JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve.

THese are the words of *Joshua*; who, after he had brought the People of *Israel* thorough many difficulties and hazards into the quiet possession of the promised

miſed land, like a good Prince and Father of his Country, was very ſollicitous, before his death, to lay the firmeſt foundation he could deviſe of the future happineſs and proſperity of that People in whoſe preſent ſettlement he had, by the bleſſing of God, been ſo ſucceſsfull an inſtrument.

And becauſe he knew no means ſo effectual to this end, as to confirm them in the Religion and Worſhip of the true God, who had by ſo remarkable and miraculous a Providence planted them in that good Land; he ſummons the people together, and repreſents to them all thoſe conſiderations that might engage them and their poſterity for ever, to continue in the true Religion. He tells them what God had already done for them, and what he had promiſed to do more, if they would be faithfull to him: And on the other hand, what fearfull calamities he had threatned, and would certainly bring upon them, in caſe they ſhould tranſgreſs his Covenant, and go and ſerve other Gods. And after many Arguments to this purpoſe, he concludes with this earneſt Exhortation at the 14*th. verſe*, *Now therefore fear the Lord, and ſerve him in ſincerity and in truth;*

truth, and put away the Gods which your fathers ſerved on the other ſide of the flood, and in Egypt; and ſerve ye the Lord.

And to give the greater weight and force to this Exhortation, he do's by a very eloquent kind of inſinuation as it were once more ſet them at liberty, and leave them to their own election: It being the nature of man to ſtick more ſtedfaſtly to that which is not violently impoſed, but is our own free and deliberate choice: *And if it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord, chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve.*

Which words offer to our conſideration theſe following Obſervations.

1. *It is here ſuppoſed that a Nation muſt be of ſome Religion or other.* *Joſhua* do's not put this to their choice, but takes it for granted.

2. *That though Religion be a matter of choice, yet it is neither a thing indifferent in it ſelf, nor to a good Governour, what Religion his people are of.* *Joſhua* do's not put it to them as if it were an indifferent matter whether they ſerved God or Idols; he had ſufficiently declared before which of theſe was to be preferred.

3. *The true Religion may have ſeveral prejudices and objections againſt it: If it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord*, intimating that upon ſome accounts, and to ſome perſons, it may appear ſo.

4. *That the true Religion hath thoſe real advantages on its ſide, that it may ſafely be referr'd to any conſiderate mans choice.* And this ſeems to be the true Reaſon why *Joſhua* refers it to them: Not that he thought the thing indifferent, but becauſe he was fully ſatisfied that the truth and goodneſs of the one above the other was ſo evident, that there was no danger that any prudent man ſhould make a wrong choice, *If it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord, chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve*; intimating, that the plain difference of the things in competition would direct them what to chuſe.

5. *The Example of Princes and Governours hath a very great influence upon the people in matters of Religion.* This I collect from the Context: And *Joſhua* was ſenſible of it; and therefore though he firmly believed the true Religion to have thoſe advantages that would certainly recommend it to every impartial mans judgment, yet knowing that the multitude are eaſily impoſed upon and led into

into error, he thought fit to encline and determine them by his own example, and by declaring his own peremptory reſolution in the caſe, *Chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve; as for me, I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord.* Laws are a good ſecurity to Religion; but the Example of Governours is a living Law, which ſecretly over-rules the minds of men, and bends them to a compliance with it.

——— *Non ſic inflectere ſenſus*
Humanos edicta valent, ut vita Regentis.

The Lives and Actions of Princes have uſually a greater ſway upon the minds of the People than their Laws.

All theſe Obſervations are I think very natural, and very conſiderable. I ſhall not be able to ſpeak to them all; but ſhall proceed ſo far as the time and your patience will give me leave.

Firſt, *It is here ſuppoſed that a Nation muſt be of ſome Religion or other. Joſhua* do's not put it to their choice, whether they would worſhip any Deity at all. That had been too wild and extravagant a ſuppoſition, and which it is likely in thoſe days had never entered into any

mans mind. But he takes it for granted that all people will be of ſome Religion; and then offers it to their conſideration which they would pitch upon, *Chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve, whether the Gods which your fathers ſerved*, &c.

Religion is a thing to which men are not only formed by education and cuſtom, but, as *Tully* ſays, *Quo omnes duce naturâ vehimur*, It is that to which we are all carried by a natural inclination: which is the true Reaſon why ſome Religion or other hath ſo univerſally prevailed in all Ages and places of the world.

The temporal felicity of men, and the ends of Government can very hardly, if at all, be attained without Religion. Take away this, and all Obligations of Conſcience ceaſe: and where there is no obligation of Conſcience, all ſecurity of Truth and Juſtice and mutual confidence among men is at an end. For why ſhould I repoſe confidence in that man, why ſhould I take his word, or believe his promiſe, or put any of my Intereſts and concernments into his power, who hath no other reſtraint upon him but that of humane Laws, and is at liberty in his own mind and principles to do whatever he

he judgeth to be expedient for his intereſt, provided he can but do it without danger to himſelf? So that declared Atheiſm and Infidelity doth juſtly bring men under a jealouſie and ſuſpition with all mankind: And every wiſe man hath reaſon to be upon his guard againſt thoſe, from whom he hath no cauſe to expect more juſtice and truth and equity in their dealings than he can compell them to by the mere dint and force of Laws. For by declaring themſelves free from all other obligations they give us fair warning what we are to expect at their hands, and how far we may truſt them. Religion is the ſtrongeſt band of humane Society; and God ſo neceſſary to the welfare and happineſs of mankind, as it could not have been more, if we could ſuppoſe the Being of God himſelf to have been purpoſely deſigned and contrived for the benefit and advantage of men: So that very well may it be taken for granted, that a Nation muſt be of ſome Religion or other.

Secondly, *Though Religion be a matter of our choice, yet it is neither a thing indifferent in it ſelf, nor to a good Governour, what Religion his people are of.* Notwith- II.

ſtanding the ſuppoſition of the Text, *Joſhua* doth not leave them at liberty whether they will ſerve God or Idols; but by a very Rhetorical Scheme of Speech endeavours to engage them more firmly to the worſhip of the true God.

To countenance and ſupport the true Religion, and to take care that the people be inſtructed in it, and that none be permitted to debauch and ſeduce men from it, properly belongs to the Civil Magiſtrate. This power the Kings of *Iſrael* always exerciſed, not only with allowance, but with great approbation and commendation from God himſelf. And the caſe is not altered ſince Chriſtianity: The better the Religion is, the better it deſerves the countenance and ſupport of the Civil Authority. And this Power of the Civil Magiſtrate in matters of Religion was never called in queſtion, but by the *Enthuſiaſts* of theſe later times: And yet among theſe, every Father and Maſter of a Family claims this Power over his Children and Servants, at the ſame time that they deny it to the Magiſtrate over his Subjects. But I would fain know where the difference lyes. Hath a Maſter of a Family more power over thoſe under his Government than the Magiſtrate hath?

hath? No man ever pretended it: Nay, ſo far is it from that, that the natural Authority of a Father may be, and often is, limited and reſtrained by the Laws of the Civil Magiſtrate. And why then may not a Magiſtrate exerciſe the ſame power over his Subjects in matters of Religion, which every Maſter challengeth to himſelf in his own Family, that is, to eſtabliſh the true worſhip of God in ſuch manner and with ſuch circumſtances as he thinks beſt, and to permit none to affront it, or to ſeduce from it thoſe that are under his care? And to prevent all miſunderſtandings in this matter, I do not hereby aſcribe any thing to the Magiſtrate that can poſſibly give him any pretence of right to reject God's true Religion, or to declare what he pleaſes to be ſo, and what Books he pleaſes to be *Canonical* and the *Word of God*; and conſequently to make a falſe Religion ſo currant by the ſtamp of his Authority, as to oblige his Subjects to the profeſſion of it: Becauſe he who acknowledgeth himſelf to derive all his Authority from God, can pretend to none againſt Him. But if a falſe Religion be eſtabliſhed by Law, the caſe here is the ſame as in all other Laws that are ſinfull in the matter of them,

but yet made by a lawfull Authority; in this case the Subject is not bound to profess a false Religion, but patiently to suffer for the constant profession of the true.

And to speak freely in this matter, I cannot think (till I be better inform'd, which I am always ready to be) that any pretence of Conscience warrants any man, that is not extraordinarily commissionʼd, as the Apostles and first Publishers of the Gospel were, and cannot justifie that Commission by Miracles as they did, to affront the establish'd Religion of a Nation (though it be false) and openly to draw men off from the profession of it in contempt of the Magistrate and the Law: All that persons of a different Religion can in such a case reasonably pretend to, is to enjoy the private liberty and exercise of their own Conscience and Religion; for which they ought to be very thankfull, and to forbear the open making of Proselytes to their own Religion, (though they be never so sure that they are in the right) till they have either an extraordinary Commission from God to that purpose, or the Providence of God make way for it by the permission or connivance of the Magistrate. Not but that

that every man hath a *Right* to publiſh and propagate the true Religion, and to declare it againſt a falſe one; but there is no *Obligation* upon any man to attempt this to no purpoſe, and when without a miracle it can have no other effect but the loſs of his own life: unleſs he have an immediate Command and Commiſſion from God to this purpoſe, and be endued with a power of Miracles, as a publick Seal and Teſtimony of that Commiſſion, which was the caſe of the *Apoſtles*, who after they had received an immediate Commiſſion were not to enter upon the execution of it, but to *ſtay at Jeruſalem, till they were endued with power from on high*. In this caſe a man is to abide all hazards, and may reaſonably expect both extraordinary aſſiſtance and ſucceſs, as the Apoſtles had; and even a miraculous protection till his work be done; and after that, if he be call'd to ſuffer Martyrdom, a ſupernatural ſupport under thoſe ſufferings.

And that they are guilty however of groſs Hypocriſie who pretend a further obligation of Conſcience in this matter, I ſhall give this plain Demonſtration, which relies upon Conceſſions generally made on all hands, and by all Parties. No Prote-

Proteſtant (that I know of) holds himſelf obliged to go and Preach up his Religion and make Converts in *Spain* or *Italy*: Nor do either the *Proteſtant* Miniſters or *Popiſh* Prieſts think themſelves bound in Conſcience to Preach the Goſpel in *Turky*, and to confute the *Alcheran*, to convert the *Mahometans*. And what is the Reaſon? becauſe of the ſeverity of the Inquiſition in *Popiſh* Countreys, and of the Laws in *Turky*. But doth the danger then alter the obligation of Conſcience? No certainly; but it makes men throw off the falſe pretence and diſguiſe of it: But where there is a real obligation of Conſcience, danger ſhould not deter men from their Duty, as it did not the Apoſtles: which ſhews their caſe to be different from ours, and that probably this matter was ſtated right at firſt. So that whatever is pretended this is certain, that the *Prieſts* and *Jeſuites* of the Church of *Rome* have in truth no more obligation of Conſcience to make Converts here in *England* than in *Sueden* or *Turky*; where it ſeems the evident danger of the attempt hath for theſe many years given them a perfect diſcharge from their duty in this particular. I ſhall joyn the

Third

Third and *Fourth* Obſervations together. That *though the true Religion may have ſeveral prejudices and objections againſt it, yet upon examination there will be found thoſe real advantages on its ſide, that it may ſafely be referred to any conſiderate mans choice: If it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord, chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve. If it ſeem evil unto you;* Intimating, that to ſome perſons and upon ſome accounts it may appear ſo. But when the matter is truly repreſented, the choice is not difficult, nor requires any long deliberation, *Chuſe you* this day *whom you will ſerve.* Let but the Cauſe be fully and impartially heard, and a wiſe man may determine himſelf upon the ſpot, and give his Verdict without ever going from the Bar.

The true Religion hath always layen under ſome prejudices with partial and inconſiderate men; which commonly ſpring from one of theſe *two* Cauſes, either the *Prepoſſeſſions of a contrary Religion,* or the *contrariety of the true Religion to the vicious inclinations and practices of men,* which uſually lyes at the bottom of all prejudice againſt Religion. Religion is an enemy to mens beloved luſts, and therefore they are enemies to Religion. I begin

gin with the *firſt*, which is as much as I ſhall be able to compaſs at this time.

I. *The Prepoſſeſſions of a falſe Religion*; which commonly pretends *two* advantages on its ſide, *Antiquity* and *Univerſality*; and is wont to object to the true Religion *Novelty* and *Singularity*. And *both* theſe are intimated both before and after the Text: *Put away the gods which your Father ſerved on the other ſide of the flood, and in Egypt: And chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve, whether the gods which your Fathers ſerved on the other ſide of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whoſe land ye dwell.* Idolatry was the Religion of their Fathers, and had ſpread it ſelf over the greateſt and moſt ancient Nations of the World and the moſt famous for Learning and Arts, the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians*; and was the Religion of the *Amorites* and the Nations round about them. So that *Joſhua* repreſents the *Heathen Religion* with all its ſtrength and advantage, and do's not diſſemble its confident pretence to *Antiquity* and *Univerſality*, whereby they would alſo inſinuate the *Novelty* and *Singularity* of the worſhip of the God of *Iſrael*. And it is very well worthy our obſervation, that one or both of theſe have always been the

the Exceptions of falſe Religions (eſpecially of *Idolatry* and *Superſtition*) againſt the true Religion. The ancient Idolaters of the World pretended their Religion to be *ancient* and *univerſal*, that their Fathers ſerved theſe Gods, and that the worſhip of the God of *Iſrael* was a plain Innovation upon the *Ancient* and *Catholick Religion* of the world, and that the very firſt riſe and original of it was within the memory of their Fathers; and no doubt they were almoſt perpetually upon the *Jews* with that pert queſtion, *Where was your Religion before Abraham?* and telling them, that it was the Religion of a very ſmall part and corner of the world, confined within a little Territory: But the great Nations of the world, the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans*, famous for all kind of knowledge and wiſedom, and indeed all the Nations round about them, worſhipped other Gods: And therefore it was an intolerable arrogance and ſingularity in them, to condemn their Fathers and all the world, to be of a Religion different from all other Nations, and hereby to ſeparate themſelves and make a *Schiſm* from the reſt of mankind.

And when the Goſpel appeared in the world, which the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* (to

(to prevent the ſcandal of that word) calls *the time of Reformation*, the *Jews* and *Heathen* ſtill renewed the ſame Objections againſt Chriſtianity. The *Jews* urged againſt it, not the ancient *Scriptures* and the true Word of God, but that which they pretended to be of much greater Authority, the *unwritten* Word, the ancient and conſtant *Traditions* of their Church; and branded this new Religion with the name of Hereſie, *After the way* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *that you call Hereſie, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers; believing all things that are written in the Law, and in the Prophets:* By which we ſee, that they of the Church of *Rome* were not the firſt who called it *Hereſie* to reject humane Traditions, and to make the Scriptures the Rule of Faith: This was done long before by their Reverend Predeceſſors, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*.

And the *Gentiles*, they pretended againſt it both *Antiquity* and *Univerſality*, the conſtant belief and practice of all Ages, and almoſt all Places of the World; *Sequimur majores noſtros qui feliciter ſecuti ſunt ſuos*, ſays *Symmachus*, *We follow our Fore-fathers, who happily followed theirs*; But you bring in a new Religion, never known nor heard of in the World before.

And

And when the Christian Religion was most miserably depraved and corrupted, in that dismal night of Ignorance which over-spread these *Western* Parts of the World about the *Ninth* and *Tenth Centuries*; and many pernicious Doctrines and Superstitious Practices were introduced, to the wofull defacing of the Christian Religion, and making it quite another thing from what our Saviour had left it; and these Corruptions and Abuses had continued for several Ages: No sooner was a *Reformation* attempted but the Church of *Rome* make the same out-cry of *Novelty* and *Singularity*: And though we have substantially answered it a thousand times, yet we cannot obtain of them to forbear that thread-bare Question, *Where was your Religion before Luther?*

I shall therefore apply my self to answer these *two* Exceptions with all the brevity and clearness I can: And I doubt not to make it appear, that as to the point of *Universality* (though that be no-wise necessary to justifie the truth of any Religion) ours is not inferior to theirs; if we take in the Christians of all Ages, and of all parts of the World: And as to the point of *Antiquity*, that our Faith

Faith and the Doctrines of our Religion have clearly the advantage of theirs; all *our* Faith being unquestionably ancient, *theirs* not so.

1. As to the Point of *Universality*. Which they of the Church of *Rome*, I know not for what reason, will needs make an inseparable property and mark of the true Church. And they never flout at the Protestant Religion with so good a grace among the ignorant People, as when they are bragging of their Numbers, and despising poor Protestancy because embraced by so few. This *pestilent Northern Heresie* (as of late they scornfully call it) entertained it seems only in this cold and cloudy Corner of the World, by a company of dull stupid People, that can neither penetrate into the proofs nor the possibility of *Transubstantiation*; whereas to the more refined *Southern* Wits all these difficult and obscure Points are as clear as their Sun at Noon-day.

But to speak to the thing it self. If Number be necessary to prove the truth and goodness of any Religion, *ours* upon enquiry will be found not so inconsiderable as our Adversaries would make it. Those of the *Reformed* Religion, according

ding to the moſt exact calculations that have been made by learned men, being eſteemed not much unequal in number to thoſe of the *Romiſh* perſuaſion. But then if we take in the ancient Chriſtian Church, whoſe Faith was the ſame with ours; and other Chriſtian Churches at this day, which all together are vaſtly greater and more numerous than the *Roman* Church, and which agree with us, ſeveral of them in very conſiderable Doctrines and Practices in diſpute between us and the Church of *Rome*, and all of them in diſclaiming that fundamental point of the *Roman* Religion, and *Summ of Chriſtianity* (as *Bellarmine* calls it) I mean the *Supremacy of the Biſhop of* Rome *over all Chriſtians and Churches in the World*, then the Number on our ſide will be much greater than on theirs.

But we will not ſtand upon this advantage with them. Suppoſe we were by much the fewer. So hath the true Church of God often been, without any the leaſt prejudice to the truth of their Religion. What think we of the Church in *Abraham*'s time, which for ought we know was confined to one Family; and one ſmall Kingdom, that

of *Melchiſedec* King of *Salem*? What think we of it in *Moſes* his time, when it was confined to one People wandering in a Wilderneſs? What of it in *Elijah*'s time, when beſides the *two* Tribes that worſhipped at *Jeruſalem*, there were in the other *ten* but *ſeven thouſand that had not bowed their knee to Baal*? What in our Saviour's time, when the whole Chriſtian Church conſiſted of twelve Apoſtles, and ſeventy Diſciples, and ſome few Followers beſide? How would *Bellarmine* have deſpiſed this little Flock, becauſe it wanted one or two of his goodlieſt marks of the true Church, *Univerſality* and *Splendor*? And what think we of the Chriſtian Church in the height of *Arianiſm* and *Pelagianiſm*, when a great part of *Chriſtendom* was over-run with theſe Errors, and the number of the *Orthodox* was inconſiderable in compariſon of the *Hereticks*?

But what need I to urge theſe Inſtances? As if the Truth of a Religion were to be eſtimated and carried by the *major Vote*; which as it can be an Argument to none but Fools, ſo I dare ſay no honeſt and wiſe man ever made uſe of it for a ſolid proof of the truth and good-

neſs

neſs of any Church or Religion. If multitude be an Argument that men are in the right, in vain then hath the *Scripture* ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to do evil:* For if this Argument be of any force, the greater Number never go wrong.

2. As to the Point of *Antiquity*. This is not always a certain Mark of the true Religion. For ſurely there was a time when Chriſtianity began and was a new Profeſſion, and then both *Judaiſm* and *Paganiſm* had certainly the advantage of it in Point of Antiquity. But the proper Queſtion in this Caſe is, *Which is the true Ancient Chriſtian Faith, that of the Church of* Rome, *or Ours?* And to make this matter plain, it is to be conſidered, that a great part of the *Roman* Faith is the ſame with *Ours*; as, namely, the Articles of the Apoſtle's *Creed*, as explained by the firſt four General Councils. And theſe make up our whole Faith, ſo far as concerns matters of meer and ſimple Belief, that are of abſolute neceſſity to Salvation. And in this Faith of Ours, there is nothing wanting that can be ſhewn in any ancient *Creed* of the Chriſtian Church. And thus far *Our* Faith, and *theirs* of the *Roman*

Church, are undoubtedly of equal Antiquity, that is, as ancient as Chriſtianity it ſelf.

All the Queſtion is, as to the matters in difference between us. The principal whereof are the twelve new Articles of the Creed of Pope *Pius* the IV, concerning the *Sacrifice of the Maſs*, *Tranſubſtantiation*, the *Communion in one kind only*, *Purgatory*, *&c.* not one of which is to be found in any ancient *Creed* or Confeſſion of Faith generally allowed in the Chriſtian Church. The Antiquity of theſe we deny, and affirm them to be Innovations; and have particularly proved them to be ſo, not only to the anſwering, but almoſt to the ſilencing of our Adverſaries.

And as for the *negative* Articles of the *Proteſtant* Religion, in oppoſition to the Errors and Corruptions of the *Romiſh* Faith, theſe are by accident become a part of our Faith and Religion, occaſioned by their Errors; as the renouncing of the Doctrines of *Arianiſm* became part of the *Catholick* Religion, after the riſe of that Hereſie.

So that the Caſe is plainly this; We believe and teach all that is contained in the *Creeds* of the ancient Chriſtian Church,

Church, and was by them esteemed necessary to Salvation: and this is *Our* Religion. But now the Church of *Rome* hath innovated in the Christian Religion, and made several Additions to it; and greatly corrupted it both in the Doctrines and Practices of it: And these *Additions* and *Corruptions* are their Religion, as it is distinct from ours; and both because they are *Corruptions* and *Novelties* we have rejected them: And our rejection of these is our Reformation: And our Reformation we grant (if this will do them any good) not to be so ancient as their Corruptions: All Reformation necessarily supposing Corruptions and Errors to have been before it.

And now we are at a little better leisure to answer that captious Question of theirs, *Where was your Religion before Luther?* Where-ever Christianity was; in some places more pure, in others more corrupted: but especially in these *Western* parts of Christendom over-grown for several Ages with manifold Errors and Corruptions, which the Reformation hath happily cut off, and cast away. So that though our *Reformation* was as late as *Luther*, our *Religion* is as ancient as Christianity it self. For when the *Ad-*

ditions which the Church of *Rome* hath made to the *ancient* Christian Faith, and their Innovations in practice are pared off, that which remains of *their* Religion is *ours*; and *this* they cannot deny to be every tittle of it the ancient Christianity.

And what other Answer than this could the *Jews* have given to the like Question, if it had been put to them by the *ancient Idolaters* of the World, *Where was your Religion before Abraham?* but the very same in substance which we now give to the Church of *Rome?* That for many Ages the Worship of the one true God had been corrupted, and the Worship of Idols had prevailed in a great part of the World: that *Abraham* was raised up by God to reform Religion, and to reduce the Worship of God to its first Institution; in the doing whereof he necessarily separated Himself and his Family from the Communion of those Idolaters. So that though the *Reformation* which *Abraham* began was new, yet his *Religion* was truly ancient; as old as that of *Noah*, and *Enoch*, and *Adam*. Which is the same in substance that we say, and with the same and equal reason.

And

And if they will ſtill complain of the *Newneſs* of our *Reformation*, ſo do we too, and are heartily ſorry it began no ſooner; but however better late than never. Beſides, it ought to be conſidered, that this Objection of *Novelty* lies againſt all Reformation whatſoever, though never ſo neceſſary, and though things be never ſo much amiſs: And it is in effect to ſay, that if things be once bad, they muſt never be better, but muſt always remain as they are; for they cannot be better, without being reformed, and a Reformation muſt begin ſometime, and whenever it begins it is certainly new. So that if a real Reformation be made, the thing juſtifies it ſelf; and no Objection of *Novelty* ought to take place againſt that which upon all accounts was ſo fit and neceſſary to be done. And if they of the Church of *Rome* would but ſpeak their mind out in this matter, they are not ſo much diſpleaſed at the Reformation which we have made becauſe it is *new*, as becauſe it is a *Reformation*. It was the humour of *Babylon* of old (as the *Prophet* tells us) that ſhe *would not be healed*; and this is ſtill the temper of the Church of *Rome*, they *hate to be reformed*; and rather than acknowledge Jer. 51. 9.

themſelves to have been once in an Error, they will continue in it for ever. And this is that which at firſt made, and ſtill continues the breach and *Separation* between us; of which we are no-wiſe guilty who have only reformed what was amiſs, but they who obſtinately perſiſt in their Errors, and will needs impoſe them upon us and will not let us be of their Communion unleſs we will ſay they are no Errors.

II. II. The other *Prejudice* againſt the true Religion is, *the contrariety of it to the vicious inclinations and practices of Men.*

It is too heavy a yoke, and lays too great a reſtraint upon humane Nature. And this is that which in truth lies at the bottom of all Objections againſt Religion, *Men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil.*

But this Argument will require a Diſcourſe by it ſelf, and therefore I ſhall not now enter upon it; only crave your patience a little longer, whilſt I make ſome Reflections upon what hath been already delivered.

You ſee what are the *Exceptions* which Idolatry and Superſtition have always made,

made, and do at this day ſtill make, againſt the true Religion; and how ſlight and inſignificant they are.

But do we then charge the Church of *Rome* with Idolatry? Our Church moſt certainly does ſo, and hath always done it from the beginning of the Reformation; in her *Homilies*, and *Liturgy*, and *Canons*, and in the *Writings* of her beſt and ableſt *Champions*. And though I have, as impartially as I could, conſider'd what hath been ſaid on both ſides in this Controverſie; yet I muſt confeſs I could never yet ſee any tolerable defence made by them againſt this heavy charge. And they themſelves acknowledge themſelves to be greatly under the ſuſpicion of it, by ſaying (as Cardinal *Perron* and others do) that the Primitive Chriſtians for ſome Ages did neither worſhip Images, nor pray to Saints, for fear of being thought to approach too near the Heathen Idolatry: And which is yet more; divers of their moſt learned men do confeſs, that if Tranſubſtantiation be not true, they are groſs Idolaters as any in the World. And I hope they do not expect it from us, that in complement to them, and to acquit them from the charge of Idolatry, we ſhould pre-

preſently deny our ſenſes, and believe Tranſubſtantiation; and if we do not believe this, they grant we have Reaſon to charge them with Idolatry.

But we own them to be a true Church; which they cannot be, if they be guilty of Idolatry: This they often urge us withall, and there ſeems at firſt ſight to be ſomething in it: And for that reaſon I ſhall endeavour to give ſo clear and ſatisfactory an anſwer to it, as that we may never more be troubled with it.

The truth is, we would fain hope, becauſe they ſtill retain the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity, and profeſs to believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, that notwithſtanding their Corruptions they may ſtill retain the true Eſſence of a Church: as a man may be truly and really a man, though he have the plague upon him; and for that reaſon be fit to be avoided by all that wiſh well to themſelves: But if this will not do, we cannot help it. Therefore to puſh the matter home; Are they ſure that this is a firm and good conſequence, *That if they be Idolaters, they cannot be a true Church?* Then let them look to it. It is they, I take it, that are concerned to prove themſelves a true Church, and not we

to

to prove it for them. And if they will not understand it of themselves, it is fit they should be told that there is a great difference between Concessions of Charity and of Necessity, and that a very different use ought to be made of them. We are willing to think the best of them; but if they dislike our Charity in this point, nothing against the hair: If they will forgive us this Injury, we will not offend them any more: But rather than have any farther difference with them about this matter, we will for quietness sake compound it thus; That till they can clearly acquit themselves from being Idolaters, they shall never more against their wills be esteemed a true Church.

And now to draw to a Conclusion. *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord*, and to worship him only; to pray to him alone, and that only in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ, as he hath given us Commandment; *because there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. If it seem evil unto you,* to have the liberty to serve God in a Language you can understand; and to have the free

free use of the Holy *Scriptures*, *which are able to make men wise unto Salvation*; and to have the Sacraments of our Religion entirely administred to us, as our Lord did institute and appoint.

And on the other hand, if it seem good to us, to put our necks once more under that yoke, which our Fathers were not able to bear: If it be really a Preferment to a Prince to hold the Pope's Stirrup, and a Privilege to be deposed by him at his pleasure, and a courtesie to be kill'd at his command: If to pray without Understanding, and to obey without Reason, and to believe against Sense; if Ignorance, and implicit Faith, and an Inquisition, be in good earnest such charming and desirable things: Then welcome Popery; which, where-ever thou comest, dost infallibly bring all these wonderfull Privileges and Blessings along with thee.

But the Question is not now about the *choice*, but the *change* of our Religion, after we have been so long settled in the quiet possession and enjoyment of it. Men are very loth to change even a false Religion. *Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which yet are no Gods?* And surely there is much more reason why we should

be

be tenacious of the Truth, and hold faſt that which is good.

We have the beſt Religion in the World, the very ſame which the *Son of God* revealed, which the *Apoſtles* planted, and confirmed by Miracles, and which the *noble Army of Martyrs* ſealed with their Blood: And we have retrench'd from it all falſe Doctrines and ſuperſtitious Practices which have been added ſince. And I think we may without immodeſty ſay, That upon the plain ſquare of Scripture and Reaſon, of the Tradition and Practice of the firſt and beſt Ages of the Chriſtian Church, we have fully juſtified *Our* Religion; and made it evident to the World, that our Adverſaries are put to very hard ſhifts, and upon a perpetual diſadvantage in the defence of *Theirs*.

I wiſh it were as eaſie for us to juſtifie our Lives as our Religion. I do not mean in compariſon of our Adverſaries (for that, as bad as we are, I hope we are yet able to do) but in compariſon of the Rules of our holy *Religion*, from which we are infinitely ſwerv'd; which I would to God we all did ſeriouſly conſider and lay to heart: I ſay, in compariſon of the Rules of our Holy Religion, which *teach*

us

as to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World, in expectation of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, *&c.*

JOSHUA

JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

And if it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord, chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve.

THeſe words, as I have already declared in the former Diſcourſe, are the laſt counſel and advice which *Joſhua* gave to the People of *Iſrael*, after he had ſafely conducted them into the Land of *Canaan*. And that he might more effectually perſwade them to continue ſtedfaſt in the worſhip of the true God, by an eloquent kind of inſinuation he doth as it were once more ſet them at liberty and leave them to their own choice; *If it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord, chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve.*

The plain ſenſe of which Words may be reſolved into this *Propoſition*, That notwithſtanding all the prejudices and objections againſt the true Religion, yet it hath thoſe real advantages on its ſide that it may ſafely be referred to any impartial

partial and conſiderate man's choice; *If it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the Lord*; intimating that to ſome perſons, and upon ſome accounts, it may ſeem ſo; but when the matter is throughly examined, the reſolution and choice cannot be difficult, nor require any long deliberation, *Chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve.*

The true Religion hath always layn under ſome prejudices with partial and inconſiderate men, ariſing chiefly from theſe *two* Cauſes; the *prepoſſeſſions of a falſe Religion*; and *the contrariety of the true Religion to the inclinations of men, and the uneaſineſs of it in point of practice.*

Firſt, *From the prepoſſeſſions of a falſe Religion*; which hath always been wont to lay claim to *Antiquity* and *Univerſality*, and to charge the true Religion with *Novelty* and *Singularity*. And both theſe are intimated before the Text; *Put away the Gods whom your Fathers ſerved, on the other ſide of the Flood and in Egypt, and chuſe you this day whom you will ſerve.* It was pretended that the worſhip of Idols was the ancient Religion of the World, of thoſe great Nations, the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans*, and of all the Nations round about them. But this hath already been conſidered at large.

Secondly,

Secondly, There are another ſort of prejudices againſt Religion, more apt to ſtick with men of better ſenſe and reaſon; and theſe ariſe principally from *the contrariety of the true Religion to the inclinations of men, and the uneaſineſs of it in point of practice.* It is pretended that Religion is a heavy yoke, and lays too great a reſtraint upon humane Nature, and that the Laws of it bear too hard upon the general inclinations of mankind.

I ſhall not at preſent meddle with the ſpeculative Objections againſt Religion, upon account of the pretended unreaſonableneſs of many things in point of Belief: becauſe the contrariety of the true Religion to the inclinations of men, and the uneaſineſs of it in point of practice, is that which in truth lies at the bottom of Atheiſm and Infidelity, and raiſes all that animoſity which is in the minds of bad men againſt Religion, and exaſperates them to oppoſe it with all their wit and malice: *Men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil.* And if this prejudice were but once removed, and men were in ſome meaſure reconciled to the practice of Religion, the ſpeculative Objections againſt it would almoſt vaniſh of themſelves: for there wants little elſe

to enable a man to answer them, but a willingness of mind to have them answered, and that we have no interest and inclination to the contrary. And therefore I shall at present wholly apply my self to remove this prejudice against Religion, from *the contrariety of it to the inclinations of men*, and *the uneasiness of it in point of practice.*

And there are two parts of this Objection.

1*st.* That a great part of the Laws of Religion do thwart the natural inclinations of men, which may reasonably be supposed to be from God. And,

2*ly.* That all of them together are a heavy yoke, and do lay too great a restraint upon humane Nature, intrenching too much upon the pleasures and liberty of it.

I. *That a great part of the Laws of Religion do thwart the natural inclinations of men, which may reasonably be supposed to be from God.* So that God seems to have set our nature and our duty at variance, to have given us appetites and inclinations one way, and Laws another: which if it were true, must needs render the practice of Religion very grievous and uneasie.

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The force of this Objection is very ſmartly expreſſed in thoſe celebrated Verſes of a Noble *Poet* of our own, which are ſo frequently in the mouths of many who are thought to bear no good will to Religion.

O wearisome condition of Humanity,
Born under one Law, to another bound;
Vainly begot, and yet forbidden Vanity;
Created ſick, commanded to be ſound.
If Nature did not take delight in blood,
She would have made more eaſie ways to good.

So that this Objection would fain charge the ſins of men upon God; firſt upon account of the evil inclinations of our Nature; and then of the contrariety of our duty to thoſe inclinations. And from the beginning man hath always been apt to lay the blame of his faults where it can leaſt lye, upon goodneſs and perfection it ſelf. The very firſt ſin that ever man was guilty of he endeavoured to throw upon God: *The woman whom thou gaveſt me* (ſaith *Adam*) *ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat:* And his poſterity are ſtill apt to excuſe themſelves the ſame way. But to return a particular anſwer to this Objection.

1. We will acknowledge ſo much of it as is true; That there is a great degeneracy and corruption of humane Nature, from what it was originally framed when it came out of God's hands: of which the Scripture gives us this account, that it was occaſioned by the voluntary tranſgreſſion of a plain and eaſie Command given by God to our firſt Parents. And this weakneſs contracted by the fall of our firſt Parents naturally deſcends upon us their Poſterity, and viſibly diſcovers it ſelf in our inclinations to evil, and impotence to that which is good.

And of this the Heathen Philoſophers, from the light of nature, and their own experience and obſervation of themſelves and others, were very ſenſible; that humane Nature was very much declined, from its primitive rectitude, and ſunk into a weak and drooping and ſickly State which they called a πτεροῤῥύησις, the moulting of the wings of the ſoul: But yet they were ſo juſt and reaſonable as not to charge this upon God, but upon ſome corruption and impurity contracted by the Soul in a former State, before its union with the Body. For the deſcent of the Soul into theſe groſs earthly Bodies they looked upon as partly the puniſhment of

of faults committed in a former State, and partly as the opportunity of a new tryal in order to its purgation and recovery. And this was the beſt account they were able to give of this matter, without the Light of Divine Revelation.

So that the degeneracy of humane Nature is univerſally acknowledged, and God acquitted from being the cauſe of it: But however, the poſterity of *Adam* do all partake of the weakneſs contracted by his fall, and do ſtill labour under the miſeries and inconveniencies of it. But then this degeneracy is not total. For though our faculties be much weakned and diſordered, yet they are not deſtroyed nor wholly perverted. Our natural Judgment and Conſcience doth ſtill direct to us what is good, and what we ought to do; and the impreſſions of the natural Law, as to the great lines of our duty, are ſtill legible upon our hearts. So that the Law written in God's Word is not contrary to the Law written upon our hearts. And therefore it is not truly ſaid, *that we are born under one Law and bound to another.* But the great diſorder is, that our inferiour faculties, our ſenſitive appetite and paſſions, are broke looſe and have got head of our Reaſon, and are upon all occaſions

apt to rebell againſt it: but our Judgment ſtill dictates the very ſame things which the Law of God doth enjoyn.

It is likewiſe very viſible, that the ſad effects of this degeneracy do not appear equally and alike in all: whether from the better or worſe temper of our Bodies or from ſome other more ſecret cauſe, I ſhall not determine, becauſe I know not: But that there is a difference is evident. For though a proneneſs to evil, and ſome ſeeds of it be in all, yet we may plainly diſcover in many very early and forward inclinations to ſome kinds of vertue and goodneſs; which being cultivated by Education, may under the ordinary influence of God's grace be carried on with great eaſe to great perfection.

And there are others who are not ſo ſtrongly bent to that which is evil, but that by good inſtruction and example in their tender years they may be ſwayed the other way, and without great difficulty formed to goodneſs.

There are ſome indeed (which is the hardeſt caſe) in whom there do very early appear ſtrong propenſions and inclinations to evil, eſpecially to ſome particular kinds of vice: But the caſe of theſe is not deſperate; though greater attenti-

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on and care, and a much more prudent management is required in the education of ſuch perſons to correct their evil tempers, and by degrees to bend their inclinations the right way: and if the ſeeds of piety and vertue be but carefully ſown at firſt, very much may be done by this means, even in the moſt depraved Natures, towards the altering and changing of them; however, to the checking and controuling of their vicious inclinations. And if theſe perſons, when they come to riper years, would purſue theſe advantages of education, and take ſome pains with themſelves, and earneſtly ſeek the aſſiſtance of God's grace, I doubt not but even theſe perſons by degrees might at laſt get the maſtery of their unhappy tempers.

For next to the Being and Perfections of God, and the immortality of our own Souls, there is no Principle of Religion that I do more firmly believe than this, that God hath that love for men that if we do heartily beg his aſſiſtance, and be not wanting to our ſelves, he will afford it to every one of us in proportion to our need of it; that he is always before hand with us, and prevents every man with the gracious offers of his help. And I doubt

not but many very perverſe Natures have thus been reclaimed. For God, who is the *Lover of Souls* (as the Son of *Sirach* calls him) though he may put ſome men under more difficult circumſtances of becoming good than others, yet he leaves no man under a fatal neceſſity of being wicked and periſhing everlaſtingly. He tenderly conſiders every man's caſe and circumſtances, and it is we that pull deſtruction upon our ſelves, with the works of our own hands: But as ſure as God is good and juſt, no man in the world is ruined for want of having ſufficient help and aid afforded to him by God for his recovery.

2. It is likewiſe to be conſidered that God did not deſign to create man in the full poſſeſſion of happineſs at firſt, but to train him up to it by the tryal of his obedience. But there could be no tryal of our obedience without ſome difficulty in our duty: Either by reaſon of powerfull temptations from without, or of croſs and perverſe inclinations from within.

Our firſt Parents, in their ſtate of innocency, had only the tryal of temptation without; to which they yielded, and were overcome; having only a natural power to have reſiſted the temptation, without any aid of ſupernatural grace:

And

And that weakneſs to good, and proneneſs to evil, which they by wilfull tranſgreſſion contracted, is naturally derived to us; and we neceſſarily partake of the bitterneſs and impurity of the Fountain from whence we ſpring. So that we now labour under a double difficulty; being aſſaulted by temptations from without, and incited by evil inclinations from within: But then, to balance theſe, we have a double advantage; that a greater reward is propoſed to us, than for ought we know would have been conferred on our firſt Parents had they continued innocent; and that we are endued with a ſupernatural power to conflict with theſe difficulties. So that, according to the merciſull diſpenſation of God, all this conflict between our inclination and our duty does only ſerve to give a fairer opportunity for the fitting tryal of our obedience, and for the more glorious reward of it.

3. God hath provided an univerſal remedy for this degeneracy and weakneſs of humane Nature: So that what we loſt by the firſt *Adam* is abundantly repaired to us by the ſecond. This St. *Paul* tells us at large, *Rom.* 5. That *as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; ſo the Grace of God hath abounded to all men by Jeſus*

ſus Chriſt: And that to ſuch a degree, as effectually to countervail the ill effects of original ſin, and really to enable men, if they be not wanting to themſelves, to maſter and ſubdue all the bad inclinations of nature, even in thoſe who ſeem to be naturally moſt corrupt and depraved.

And if this be true, we may without any reflection upon God acknowledge, that though he did not at firſt *create* man *ſick* and *weak*, yet he having made himſelf ſo, his poſterity are born ſo: But then God hath not left us helpleſs in this weak and miſerable State, into which by wilfull tranſgreſſion mankind is fallen: But as he commands us to be *ſound*, ſo he affords us ſufficient aids of his grace by Jeſus Chriſt for our recovery.

And though *there is a Law in our Members warring againſt the Law of our Minds, and captivating us to the Law of Sin and Death*; *i. e.* though our ſenſitive appetite and paſſions are apt to rebell againſt the reaſon of our minds and the dictates of our natural Conſcience, yet every Chriſtian may ſay with St. *Paul*, *Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *i. e.* hath not left us deſtitute of a ſufficient aid and ſtrength to enable us to conquer the rebellious motions

tions of ſin, by the powerfull aſſiſtance of that grace which is ſo plentifully offered to us in the Goſpel. And this is the caſe of all thoſe who live under the Goſpel: As for others, as their caſe is beſt known to God, ſo we have no reaſon to doubt but that his infinite goodneſs and mercy takes that care of them which becomes *a mercifull Creatour:* Though both the meaſures, and the methods of his mercy towards them are ſecret and unknown to us.

4. The hardeſt conteſt between man's inclination and duty, is in thoſe who have wilfully contracted vicious habits, and by that means, rendred their duty much more difficult to themſelves; having greatly improved the evil inclinations of nature by wicked practice and cuſtom. For the *Scripture* plainly ſuppoſeth, that men may debauch even corrupt nature, and make themſelves ten-fold more the Children of Wrath and of the Devil than they were by Nature.

This is a caſe ſadly to be deplored, but yet not utterly to be deſpaired of. And therefore thoſe who by a long progreſs in an evil courſe, are plunged into this ſad condition, ought to conſider that they are not to be reſcued out of it by an ordinary reſolution, and a common grace of God.

God. Their caſe plainly requires an extraordinary remedy. For he that is deeply engaged in vice is like a man laid faſt in a bogg, who by a faint and lazy ſtruggling to get out, does but ſpend his ſtrength to no purpoſe, and ſinks himſelf the deeper into it: The only way is, by a reſolute and vigorous effort to ſpring out, if poſſible, at once. And therefore in this caſe, to a vigorous reſolution there muſt be joyned an earneſt application to God for his powerfull grace and aſſiſtance, to help us out of this miſerable State. And if we be truly ſenſible of the deſperate danger of our condition, the preſſing neceſſity of our caſe will be apt to inſpire us with a mighty reſolution. For *power and neceſſity are neighbours*, and never dwell far aſunder. When men are ſorely urged and preſſed, they find a power in themſelves which they thought they had not. Like a coward driven up to a wall, who in the extremity of diſtreſs and deſpair will fight terribly and perform wonders: or like a man lame of the Gout, who being aſſaulted by a preſent and terrible danger forgets his Diſeaſe, and will find his legs rather than loſe his life.

And in this, I do not ſpeak above the rate of humane Nature, and what men throughly

throughly rouſed and awakened to a ſenſe of their danger, by a mighty reſolution may morally do, through that Divine grace and aſſiſtance which is ever ready to be afforded to well reſolved minds, and ſuch as are ſincerely bent to return to God and their Duty. More than this I cannot ſay for the encouragement of thoſe who have proceeded far in an evil courſe: And they who have made their caſe ſo very deſperate, ought to be very thankfull to God that there is any remedy left for them.

5. From all that hath been ſaid, it evidently appears, how malicious a ſuggeſtion it is, that God ſeeks the deſtruction of men, and hath made his Laws on purpoſe ſo difficult and croſs to our inclinations that he might have an advantage to ruin us for our diſobedience to them. Alas, we are ſo abſolutely under the Power of God, and ſo unable to withſtand it, that he may deſtroy us when he pleaſeth, without ſeeking pretences for it: *For who hath reſiſted his will?* If goodneſs were not his nature, he hath power enough to bear out whatever he hath a mind to do to us. But our deſtruction is plainly of our ſelves, and God is free from the bloud of all men. And he hath not made the way to Eternal Life

Life ſo difficult to any of us, with a deſign to make us miſerable, but that we by a vigorous reſolution, and an unwearied diligence, and a patient continuance in well doing, might win and wear a more glorious Crown, and be fit to receive a more ample reward from his bounty and goodneſs: yea, in ſome ſenſe, I may ſay, from his juſtice; *For God is not unrighteous, to forget our work and labour and love.* He will fully conſider all the pains that any of us take in his ſervice, and all the difficulties that we ſtruggle with out of love to God and goodneſs. So that this Objection, from the clafhing of our duty with our inclination, is I hope fully anſwered: Since God hath provided ſo powerfull and effectual a remedy againſt our natural impotency and infirmity, by the Grace of the Goſpel.

And though to thoſe who have wilfully contracted vicious habits a religious and vertuous courſe of life be very difficult, yet the main difficulty lyes in our firſt entrance upon it; And when that is over, the ways of goodneſs are as eaſie as it is fit any thing ſhould be that is ſo excellent, and that hath the encouragement of ſo glorious a reward. Cuſtom will reconcile men almoſt to any thing: but there

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are thoſe charms in the ways of wiſedom and vertue, that a little acquaintance and converſation with them will ſoon make them more delightfull than any other courſe. And who would grudge any pains and trouble to bring himſelf into ſo ſafe and happy a condition: After we have tryed both courſes, of Religion and Profaneneſs, of Vertue and Vice, we ſhall certainly find, that nothing is ſo wiſe, ſo eaſie, and ſo comfortable as to be vertuous and good, and always to do that which we are inwardly convinced we ought to do. Nor would I deſire more of any man in this matter, than to follow the ſobereſt convictions of his own mind, and to do that which upon the moſt ſerious conſideration at all times, in proſperity and affliction, in ſickneſs and health, in the time of life and at the hour of death, he judgeth wiſeſt and ſafeſt for him to do. I proceed to the

II. Branch of the Objection, *That the Laws of Religion* (and particularly of the *Chriſtian Religion*) *are a heavy yoke, laying too great a reſtraint upon humane nature, and entrenching too much upon the pleaſures and liberty of it.* II.

There

There was, I confeſs, ſome pretence for this Objection againſt the *Jewiſh* Religion; which by the multitude of its poſitive Inſtitutions and external Obſervances muſt needs have been very burthenſome. And the ſame Objection lyes againſt the Church of *Rome*, who (as they have handled Chriſtianity) by the unreaſonable number of their needleſs and ſenſeleſs Ceremonies, have made the yoke of *Chriſt* heavier than that of *Moſes*, and the *Goſpel* a more carnal Commandment than the *Law*. So that *Chriſtianity* is loſt among them in the trappings and accoutrements of it: with which inſtead of adorning Religion they have ſtrangely diſguiſed it, and quite ſtifled it in the crowd of external Rites and Ceremonies.

But the pure Chriſtian Religion, as it was delivered by our *Saviour*, hath hardly any thing in it that is poſitive; except the two Sacraments, which are not very troubleſome neither, but very much for our comfort and advantage, becauſe they convey and confirm to us the great bleſſings and privileges of our Religion. In other things, Chriſtianity hath hardly impoſed any other Laws upon us but what are enacted in our Natures, or are agreeable to the prime and fundamental

Laws

Laws of it: nothing but what every man's reaſon either dictates to him to be neceſſary, or approves as highly fit and reaſonable.

But we do moſt groſly miſtake the nature of pleaſure and liberty, if we promiſe them to our ſelves in any evil and wicked courſe. For, upon due ſearch and tryal it will be found, that true pleaſure, and perfect freedom, are no-where to be found but in the practice of vertue, and in the ſervice of God. The Laws of Religion do not abridge us of any pleaſure that a wiſe man can deſire, and ſafely enjoy, I mean without a greater evil and trouble conſequent upon it. The pleaſure of commanding our appetites, and governing our paſſions, by the rules of Reaſon (which are the Laws of God) is infinitely to be preferred before any ſenſual pleaſure whatſoever: Becauſe it is the pleaſure of wiſdom and diſcretion; and gives us the ſatisfaction of having done that which is beſt and fitteſt for reaſonable Creatures to do. Who would not rather chuſe to govern himſelf as *Scipio* did, amidſt all the temptations and opportunities of ſenſual pleaſure which his power and victories preſented to him, than to wallow in all the delights of ſenſe?

Nothing is more certain in reaſon and experience, than that every inordinate appetite and affection is a puniſhment to it ſelf; and is perpetually croſſing its own pleaſure, and defeating its own ſatisfaction, by over-ſhooting the mark it aims at. For inſtance, *Intemperance* in eating and drinking, inſtead of delighting and ſatisfying nature, doth but load and cloy it; and inſtead of quenching a natural thirſt, which it is extremely pleaſant to do, creates an unnatural one, which is troubleſome and endleſs. The pleaſure of *Revenge*, as ſoon as it is executed, turns into grief and pity, guilt and remorſe, and a thouſand melancholy wiſhes that we had reſtrained our ſelves from ſo unreaſonable an Act. And the ſame is as evident in other ſenſual exceſſes, not ſo fit to be deſcribed. We may truſt *Epicurus* for this, that there can be no true pleaſure without temperance in the uſe of pleaſure. And God and Reaſon have ſet us no other bounds concerning the uſe of ſenſual pleaſures, but that we take care not to be injurious to our ſelves, or others, in the kind, or degree of them. And it is very viſible, that all ſenſual exceſs is naturally attended with a double inconvenience: As it goes beyond the limits of nature,

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it begets bodily pains and diſeaſes: As it tranſgreſſeth the rules of Reaſon and Religion, it breeds guilt and remorſe in the mind. And theſe are, beyond compariſon, the two greateſt evils in this world; a diſeaſed body, and a diſcontented mind: And in this I am ſure I ſpeak to the inward feeling and experience of men; and ſay nothing but what every vicious man finds, and hath a more lively ſenſe of, than is to be expreſſed by words.

When all is done, there is no pleaſure comparable to that of Innocency, and freedom from the ſtings of a guilty conſcience: This is a pure and ſpiritual pleaſure, much above any ſenſual delight. And yet among all the delights of ſenſe, that of health (which is the natural conſequent of a ſober, and chaſte, and regular life) is a ſenſual pleaſure far beyond that of any Vice: For it is the life of life; and that which gives a gratefull reliſh to all our other enjoyments. It is not indeed ſo violent and tranſporting a pleaſure, but it is pure, and even, and laſting, and hath no guilt and regret, no ſorrow and trouble in it, or after it: which is a worm that infallibly breeds in all vicious and unlawfull pleaſures, and makes them to be bitterneſs in the end.

All the ways of ſin are ſo beſet with thorns and difficulties on every ſide, there are ſo many unanſwerable objections againſt Vice, from the unreaſonableneſs and uglineſs of it, from the remorſe that attends it, from the endleſs miſery that follows it, that none but the raſh and inconſiderate can obtain leave of themſelves to commit it. It is the Daughter of inadvertency, and blindneſs, and folly; and the Mother of guilt, and repentance, and woe. There is no pleaſure that will hold out and abide with us to the laſt, but that of Innocency and well-doing. All ſin is folly; and as *Seneca* truly ſays, *Omnis ſtultitia laborat faſtidio ſui; All folly ſoon grows ſick and weary of it ſelf.* The pleaſure of it is ſlight and ſuperficial, but the trouble and remorſe of it pierceth our very hearts.

And then as to the other part of the Objection, *That Religion reſtrains us of our liberty;* The contrary is moſt evidently true, that ſin and vice are the greateſt ſlavery. For he is truly a ſlave, who is not at liberty to follow his own judgment, and to do thoſe things which he is inwardly convinced it is beſt for him to do: but is ſubject to the unreaſonable commands, and the tyrannical power and violence of his luſts and paſſions: So that he is not maſter

ſter of himſelf, but other Lords have got dominion over him, and he is perfectly at their beck and command. One vice or paſſion bids him go, and he goes; another come, and he comes; and a third, do this and he doth it. The man is at perpetual variance with his own mind, and continually committing the things which he condemns in himſelf. And it is all one, whether a man be ſubject to the will and humour of another perſon, or to his own luſts and paſſions. Only this of the two is the worſe; becauſe the Tyrant is at home, and always ready at hand to domineer over him: he is got within him, and ſo much the harder to be vanquiſhed and overcome.

But the ſervice of God, and obedience to his Laws is perfect liberty. Becauſe the Law of God requires nothing of us, but what is recommended to us by our own reaſon and from the benefit and advantage of doing it: nothing but what is much more for our own intereſt to do it, than it can be for God's to command it. And if in ſome things God exact obedience of us more indiſpenſibly, and under ſeverer penalties, it is becauſe thoſe things are in their Nature more neceſſary to our felicity. And how could God poſſibly have dealt more graciouſly and kindly

with us, than to oblige us moſt ſtrictly to that which is moſt evidently for our good: and to make ſuch Laws for us, as if we live in obedience to them will infallibly make us happy? So that taking all things into conſideration, the intereſt of our bodies and our ſouls, of the preſent and the future, of this world and the other, Religion is the moſt reaſonable and wiſe, the moſt comfortable and compendious courſe that any man can take in order to his own happineſs.

The conſideration whereof ought to be a mighty endearment of our duty to us, and a moſt prevalent argument with us to yield a ready and chearfull obedience to the Laws of God; which are in truth ſo many acts of grace and favour to mankind, the real privileges of our nature, and the proper means and cauſes of our happineſs: And do reſtrain us from nothing, but from doing miſchief to our ſelves, from playing the fools and making our ſelves miſerable.

And therefore inſtead of oppoſing Religion, upon pretence of the unreaſonable reſtraints of it, we ought to thank God heartily, that he hath laid ſo ſtrict an obligation upon us to regard and purſue our true intereſt; and hath been pleaſed

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to take that care of us, as to ſet bounds to our looſe and wild appetites by our duty; and in giving us rules to live by, hath no ways complyed with our inconſiderate and fooliſh inclinations, to our real harm and prejudice: But hath made thoſe things neceſſary for us to do, which in all reſpects are beſt for us; and which, if we were perfectly left to our own liberty, ought in all reaſon to be our free and firſt choice: And hath made the folly and inconvenience of ſin ſo groſly palpable, that every man may ſee it beforehand that will but conſider, and at the beginning of a bad courſe look to the end of it: and they that will not conſider, ſhall be forced from wofull experience at laſt to acknowledge it, when they find the diſmal effects and miſchievous conſequences of their vices ſtill meeting them at one turn or other.

And now, by all that hath been ſaid upon this Argument, I hope we are ſatisfied that Religion is no ſuch intolerable yoke; and that upon a due and full conſideration of things it cannot *ſeem evil* unto any of us *to ſerve the Lord:* nay, on the contrary, that it is abſolutely neceſſary, both to our preſent peace and our future felicity: And that a religious

and vertuous life is not only upon all accounts the moſt prudent, but after we are entred upon it, and accuſtomed to it, the moſt pleaſant courſe that any man can take: and however inconſiderate men may complain of the reſtraints of Religion that it is not one jot more our duty, than it is our privilege and our happineſs.

And I cannot think that upon ſober conſideration any man could ſee reaſon to thank God to be releaſed from any of his Laws, or to have had the contrary to them enjoyned. Let us ſuppoſe, that the Laws of God had been juſt the *Reverſe* of what they now are; that he had commanded us, under ſevere penalties, to deal falſly and fraudulently with our neighbour; to demean our ſelves ungratefully to our beſt friends and benefactors; to be drunk every day, and to purſue ſenſual pleaſures to the endangering of our health and life: How ſhould we have complained of the unreaſonableneſs of theſe Laws, and have murmured at the ſlavery of ſuch intolerable impoſitions? And yet now that God hath commanded us the contrary, things every way agreeable to our reaſon and intereſt, we are not pleaſed neither. What will content us? As our Saviour expoſtulates in a like

a like caſe, *Whereunto ſhall I liken this generation? It is like unto Children playing in the Market-place, and calling unto their Companions, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned, and ye have not lamented.* This is perfectly childiſh, to be pleaſed with nothing; neither to like this, nor the contrary. We are not contented with the Laws of God as they are, and yet the contrary to them we ſhould have eſteemed the greateſt grievance in the World.

And if this be true that the Laws of God, how contrary ſoever to our vicious inclinations, are really calculated for our benefit and advantage, it would almoſt be an affront to wiſe and conſiderate men to importune them to their intereſt; and with great earneſtneſs to perſuade them to that which in all reſpects is ſo viſibly for their advantage, *Chuſe you* therefore *this day whom you will ſerve*; God, or your luſts. And take up a ſpeedy reſolution in a matter of ſo great and preſſing a concernment; chuſe you *this day.*

Where there is great hazard in the doing of a thing, it is good to deliberate long before we undertake it: but where the thing is not only ſafe but beneficial, and not only hugely beneficial but highly neceſſary; when our life and our happi-

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neſs depends upon it, and all the danger lies in the delay of it; there we cannot be too ſudden in our reſolution, nor too ſpeedy in the execution of it. That which is evidently ſafe, needs no deliberation; and that which is abſolutely neceſſary, will admit of none.

Therefore reſolve upon it out of hand; *To day, whileſt it is called to day, leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* In the days of your youth and health; for *that is the acceptable time*, that is *the day of ſalvation:* Before *the evil day comes*, and you be driven to it by the terrible apprehenſion and approach of death, when men fly to God only for fear of his wrath. For the greateſt Atheiſts and Infidels, when they come to dye, (if they have any of that reaſon left, which they have uſed ſo ill) have commonly right opinions about God and Religion. For then the confidence as well as the comfort of Atheiſm leaves them, as the Devil uſes to do Witches when they are in diſtreſs. Then with *Nebuchadnezzar*, when they are recovered from being beaſts, they look up to heaven and their underſtanding returns to them: Then they believe a God, and cannot help it: they believe, and tremble at the

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thoughts of him. Thus *Lucretius*, one of their *great Authors*, obſerves, that when men are in diſtreſs,

Acrius advertunt animos ad Religionem.

The thoughts of Religion are then more quick and pungent upon their minds.

Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo Eliciuntur, & eripitur perſona, manet res.

Mens words then come from the bottom of their hearts; the mask is taken off, and things then appear as in truth they are.

But then perhaps it may be too late to make this choice: Nay then it can hardly be choice, but neceſſity. Men do not then chuſe to ſerve the Lord, but they are urged and forced to it by their fears. They have ſerved their luſts all their life long, and now they would fain ſerve themſelves of God at the hour of death. They have done what they can, by their inſolent contempt and defiance of the Almighty, to make themſelves miſerable; and now that they can ſtand out no longer againſt him, they are contented at laſt to be beholding to him to make them happy. The mercies of God are vaſt and bound-

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leſs, but yet methinks it is too great a preſumption in all reaſon, for men to deſign before-hand to make the mercy of God the ſanctuary and retreat of a ſinfull life.

To draw then to a Concluſion of this Diſcourſe. If ſafety, or pleaſure, or liberty, or wiſdom, or vertue, or even happineſs it ſelf have any temptation in them, Religion hath all theſe baits and allurements. What *Tully* ſays of *Philoſophy* is much more true of the *Chriſtian Religion*, the Wiſdom and Philoſophy which is from above; *Nunquam ſatis laudari poterit, cui qui pareat, omne tempus ætatis ſine moleſtia degere poſſit. We can never praiſe it enough, ſince whoever lives according to the rules of it, may paſs the whole age of his life* (I may add, his whole duration, this life and the other) *without trouble.*

Philoſophy hath given us ſeveral plauſible rules for the attaining of peace and tranquillity of mind, but they fall very much ſhort of bringing men to it. The very beſt of them fail us upon the greateſt occaſions. But the *Chriſtian Religion* hath effectually done all that which *Philoſophy* pretended to, and aimed at. The Precepts and Promiſes of the Holy Scriptures are every way ſufficient for our comfort, and for our inſtruction in righte-

righteouſneſs: to correct all the errors, and to bear us up under all the evils and adverſities of humane life: eſpecially that holy and heavenly Doctrine which is contained in the admirable *Sermons* of our Saviour, *Quem cum legimus, quem Philoſophum non contemnimus?* whoſe excellent diſcourſes when we reade, what Philoſopher do we not deſpiſe? None of the *Philoſophers* could, upon ſure grounds, give that encouragement to their *Scholars* which our *Saviour* does to his *Diſciples*; *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls. For my yoke is eaſie, and my burthen is light.*

This is the advantage of the *Chriſtian Religion* ſincerely believed and practiſed, that it gives perfect reſt and tranquillity to the mind of man: It frees us from the guilt of an evil conſcience, and from the power of our luſts, and from the ſlaviſh fear of death and of the vengeance of another World. It builds our comfort upon a rock, which will abide all ſtorms, and remain unſhaken in every condition, and will laſt and hold out for ever: *He that heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doth them* (ſaith our *Lord*) *I will liken him to a wiſe man, who built his houſe upon a rock.*

In ſhort, Religion makes the life of man

man a wiſe deſign, regular and conſtant to its ſelf; becauſe it unites all our reſolutions and actions in one great end: Whereas without Religion the life of man is a wild, and fluttering, and inconſiſtent thing, without any certain ſcope and deſign. The vicious man lives at randome, and acts by chance: For he that walks by no rule can carry on no ſettled and ſteady deſign. It would pity a man's heart to ſee, how hard ſuch men are put to it for diverſion, and what a burden time is to them; and how ſolicitous they are to deviſe ways, not to ſpend it but to ſquander it away. For their great grievance is conſideration, and to be obliged to be intent upon any thing that is ſerious. They hurry from one vanity and folly to another; and plunge themſelves into drink, not to quench their thirſt, but their guilt: and are beholding to every vain man, and to every trifling occaſion, that can but help to take time off their hands. Wretched and inconſiderate men! who have ſo vaſt a work before them, the happineſs of all eternity to take care of and provide for, and yet are at a loſs how to employ their time! So that Irreligion and Vice makes life an extravagant and unnatu-

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ral thing, becauſe it perverts and overthrows the natural courſe and order of things. For inſtance; according to nature men labour to get an Eſtate, to free themſelves from temptations to rapine and injury; and that they may have wherewithall to ſupply their own wants, and to relieve the needs of others. But now the covetous man heaps up Riches, not to enjoy them, but to have them; and ſtarves himſelf in the midſt of plenty, and moſt unnaturally cheats and robbs himſelf of that which is his own; and makes a hard ſhift to be as poor and miſerable with a great Eſtate, as any man can be without it. According to the deſign of nature, men ſhould eat and drink that they may live; but the voluptuous man only lives that he may eat and drink. Nature in all ſenſual enjoyments deſigns pleaſure, which may certainly be had within the limits of vertue: But vice raſhly purſues pleaſure into the enemies quarters; and never ſtops, till the ſinner be ſurrounded and ſeized upon by pain and torment.

So that take away God and Religion, and men live to no purpoſe; without propoſing any worthy and conſiderable end of life to themſelves. Whereas the

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fear of God, and the care of our immortal Souls, fixeth us upon one great deſign, to which our whole life, and all the actions of it are ultimately referr'd, *Ubi unus Deus colitur* (ſaith *Lactantius*) *ibi vita, & omnis actus, ad unum caput, & ad unam ſummam refertur*; When we acknowledge God as the Author of our Being, as our Sovereign, and our Judge, our end and our happineſs is then fixed; and we can have but one reaſonable deſign, and that is, by endeavouring to pleaſe God to gain his favour and protection in this World, and to arrive at the bliſsfull enjoyment of him in the other: *In whoſe preſence is fullneſs of joy; and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore.* To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be all honour and glory, dominion and power, now and for ever. *Amen.*

JERE-

JEREMIAH XIII. 23.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the Leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo do good that are accuſtomed to do evil.

CONſidering the great difficulty of reclaiming thoſe who are far gone in an evil courſe, it is no more than needs to uſe all ſorts of Arguments to this purpoſe: From the conſideration of the evil of ſin, and of the goodneſs of God and his wonderfull patience and long-ſuffering towards us in the midſt of our infinite Provocations: From his great mercy and pity declared to us in all thoſe gratious means and methods which he uſeth for our recovery: And from his readineſs and forwardneſs after all our Rebellions to receive us upon our repentance, and to be perfectly reconciled to us as if we had never offended him: And from the final iſſue and event of a wicked life, the diſmal and endleſs miſeries of another

World, into which we ſhall inevitably fall except we repent in time and return to a better mind: And laſtly, from the danger of being hardened in an evil courſe, paſt all remedy and hopes of Repentance.

And yet I am very ſenſible that to diſcourſe to Men of the impoſſibility, or at leaſt the extreme difficulty, of reſcuing themſelves out of this miſerable ſtate ſeems to be an odd and croſs kind of Argument, and more apt to drive people to deſpair than to gain them to repentance.

But ſince the Spirit of God is pleaſed to make uſe of it to this purpoſe, we may ſafely rely upon infinite Wiſedom for the fitneſs of it to awaken ſinners to a ſenſe of their condition, in order to their recovery. For here in the Text, after terrible threatnings of Captivity and deſolation to the People of the *Jews*, who were extremely wicked and degenerate, through an univerſal depravation of manners in all ranks of men from the higheſt to the loweſt, ſo that they ſeemed to ſtand upon the brink of ruine, and to be fatally devoted to it; to add to the terrour and force of theſe threatnings, God by his Prophet repreſents to them the

the infinite danger and extreme difficulty of their caſe, to ſee if he could ſtartle them by telling them into what a deſperate condition they had plunged themſelves; being by a long cuſtom of ſinning ſo far engaged in an evil courſe, that they had almoſt cut off themſelves from a poſſibility of retreat; ſo that the difficulty of their change ſeemed next to a natural impoſſibility. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye alſo do good that are accuſtom'd to do evil.*

The Expreſſion is very high, and it is to be hoped ſomewhat Hyperbolical, and above the juſt meaning of the words. Which are, I think, only deſigned to ſignifie to us the extreme difficulty of making this change; which is therefore reſembled to a natural impoſſibility, as coming very near it, though not altogether up to it.

And that this Expreſſion is thus to be mitigated, will appear more than probable, by conſidering ſome other like paſſages of Scripture. As, where our Saviour compares the difficulty of a rich Man's Salvation to that which is naturally impoſſible, *viz.* to *a Camel's paſſing thorough the eye of a Needle:* Nay, he pitcheth

his expreſſion higher, and doth not only make it a thing of equal but of greater difficulty; *I ſay unto you, it is eaſier for a Camel to go thorough the eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.* And yet when he comes to explain this to his Diſciples, he tells them that he only meant that the thing was very difficult, *how hard is it for thoſe that have riches to be ſaved?* and that it was not abſolutely impoſſible, but ſpeaking according to humane probability: *with Men this is impoſſible, but not with God.*

And thus alſo it is reaſonable to underſtand that ſevere paſſage of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 6. 4. *It is impoſſible for them that were once enlightened, if they fall away, to renew them again to Repentance.* *It is impoſſible*, that is, it is very difficult.

In like manner we are to underſtand this high Expreſſion in the Text, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye alſo do good that are accuſtomed to do evil*; that is, this moral change of men, ſettled and fixed in bad habits, is almoſt as difficult as the other.

From the words thus explained *two* things will properly fall under our Conſideration.

Firſt,

Firſt, The great difficulty of reforming vitious habits or of changing a bad courſe, to thoſe who have been deeply engaged in it and long accuſtomed to it.

Secondly, Notwithſtanding the great difficulty of the thing, what ground of hope and encouragement there is left that it may be done. So that notwithſtanding the appearing harſhneſs of the Text, the reſult of my diſcourſe will be, not to diſcourage any, how bad ſoever, from attempting this change, but to put them upon it, and to perſwade them to it; and to remove out of the way that which may ſeem to be one of the ſtrongeſt Objections againſt all endeavours of men very bad, to become better.

I. *Firſt*, The great difficulty of reforming vitious habits, or of changing a bad courſe, to thoſe who have been deeply engaged in it and long accuſtomed to it. And this difficulty ariſeth, partly from the general nature of habits indifferently conſidered whether they be good, or bad, or indifferent; partly, from the particular nature of evil and vitious habits; and partly, from the natural and judicial conſequences of a great progreſs and long continuance in an evil courſe. I.

By the consideration of these three particulars, the extreme difficulty of this change, together with the true causes and reasons of it, will fully appear.

1. If we consider the nature of all Habits, whether good, or bad, or indifferent. The custom and frequent practice of any thing begets in us a facility and easiness in doing it. It bends the powers of our Soul, and turns the stream and current of our animal Spirits such a way, and gives all our faculties a tendency and pliableness to such a sort of actions. And when we have long stood bent one way, we grow settled and confirmed in it; and cannot without great force and violence be restored to our former state and condition. For the perfection of any habit whether good, or bad, induceth a kind of necessity of acting accordingly. A rooted habit becomes a governing Principle, and bears almost an equal sway in us with that which is natural. It is a kind of a new nature superinduced, and even as hard to be expelled as some things which are Primitively and Originally natural. When we bend a thing at first it will endeavour to restore it self; but it may be held bent so long till it will continue so of it self and grow crooked; and then

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it may require more force and violence to reduce it to its former ſtreightneſs than we uſed to make it crooked at firſt. This is the nature of all habits, the farther we proceed the more we are confirmed in them: and that which at firſt we did voluntarily, by degrees becomes ſo natural and neceſſary that it is almoſt impoſſible for us to do otherwiſe. This is plainly ſeen in the experience of every day, in things good and bad, both in leſſer and greater matters.

2. This difficulty ariſeth more eſpecially from the particular nature of evil and vitious habits. Theſe, becauſe they are ſuitable to our corrupt nature, and conſpire with the inclinations of it, are likely to be of a much quicker growth and improvement, and in a ſhorter ſpace, and with leſs care and endeavour, to arrive at maturity and ſtrength, than the habits of grace and goodneſs. Conſidering the propenſion of our depraved nature, the progreſs of vertue and goodneſs is up the hill, in which we not only move hardly and heavily, but are eaſily roll'd back: but by wickedneſs and vice we move downwards; which, as it is much quicker and eaſier, ſo is it harder for us to ſtop in that courſe, and infinitely more difficult to return from it.

Not but that at firſt a ſinner hath ſome conſiderable checks and reſtraints upon him, and meets with ſeveral rubs, and difficulties in his way; the ſhame and unreaſonableneſs of his vices, and the trouble and diſquiet which they create to him: But he breaks looſe from theſe reſtraints, and gets over theſe difficulties by degrees: and the faſter and farther he advanceth in an evil courſe the leſs trouble ſtill they give him, till at laſt they almoſt quite loſe their force, and give him little or no diſturbance.

Shame alſo is a great reſtraint upon ſinners at firſt, but that ſoon falls off: and when men have once loſt their innocence, their modeſty is not like to be long troubleſome to them. For impudence comes on with vice, and grows up with it. Leſſ-ſervices do not baniſh all ſhame and modeſty, but great and abominable crimes harden mens foreheads and make them ſhameleſs. *Were they aſhamed* (ſaith the *Prophet*) *when they committed abomination? nay they were not aſhamed, neither could they bluſh.* When men have the heart to do a very bad thing, they ſeldom want the face to bear it out.

And

And as for the *unreaſonableneſs* of vice, though nothing in the World be more evident to a free and impartial judgment, and the ſinner himſelf diſcerns it clearly enough at his firſt ſetting out in a wicked courſe.

——— Video meliora, probóque,
Deteriora ſequor.

He offends againſt the light of his own mind, and does wickedly when he knows better: yet after he hath continued for ſome time in this courſe and is heartily engaged in it, his fooliſh heart is darken'd, and the notions of good and evil are obſcured and confounded, and things appear to him in a falſe and imperfect light: His luſts do at once blind and byaſs his underſtanding; and his judgment by degrees goes over to his inclinations; and he cannot think that there ſhould be ſo much reaſon againſt thoſe things for which he hath ſo ſtrong an affection. He is now engaged in a Party, and factiouſly concerned to maintain it, and to make the beſt of it: and to that end, he bends all his wits to advance ſuch principles as are fitteſt to juſtifie his wicked practices; and in all debates plainly favours

vours that ſide of the Queſtion which will give the greateſt countenance and encouragement to them. When men *are corrupt and do abominable works*, they *ſay in their hearts there is no God*, that is, they would fain think ſo. And every thing ſerves for an Argument to a willing mind; and every little objection appears ſtrong and conſiderable, which makes againſt that which men are loth ſhould be true.

Not that any man ever ſatisfied himſelf in the Principles of Infidelity, or was able to arrive to a ſteady and unſhaken perſuaſion of the truth of them, ſo as not vehemently to doubt and fear the contrary. However, by this means many men though they cannot fully comfort, yet they make a ſhift to cheat themſelves; to ſtill their Conſciences and lay them aſleep for a time, ſo as not to receive any great and frequent diſturbance in their courſe from the checks and rebukes of their own minds. And when theſe reſtraints are removed, the work of iniquity goes on a-main, being favoured both by wind and tide.

3. The difficulty of this change ariſeth likewiſe from the natural and judicial conſequences of a great progreſs and long con-

continuance in an evil course. My meaning is, that inveterate evil habits do partly from their own nature, and partly from the just judgment and permission of God, put men under several disadvantages of moving effectually towards their own recovery.

By a long custome of sinning mens Consciences grow brawny, and *seared as it were with a hot iron*; and by being often trampled upon they become hard as the beaten road. So that unless it be upon some extraordinary occasion, they are seldom awakened to a sense of their guilt. And when mens hearts are thus hard, the best counsels make but little impression upon them. For they are steel'd against reproof, and impenetrable to good advice; which is therefore seldom offered to them, even by those that wish them well, because they know it to be both unacceptable, and unlikely to prevail. It requires a great deal of good nature in a very bad man, to be able patiently to bear to be told of his faults.

Besides, that habitual wickedness is naturally apt to banish consideration, to weaken our resolution, and to discourage our hopes both of God's grace and assistance, and of his mercy and forgiveness; which

which are the beſt means and encouragement to repentance.

Sin is a great enemy to *Conſideration*; and eſpecially when men are deeply plunged into it, their condition is ſo very bad, that they are loth to think of it and to ſearch into it. A vitious man is a very deformed ſight, and to none more than to himſelf; and therefore he loves to turn his Eyes another way, and to divert them as much as he can from looking upon himſelf. He is afraid to be alone, leſt his own mind ſhould arreſt him, and his Conſcience ſhould take the opportunity to call him to an account. And if at any time his own thoughts meet with him, and he cannot avoid conſideration, he is ready to ſay as *Ahab* did to *Elijah*, *Haſt thou found me, O my enemy!* and is as glad to ſhake it off as a man is to get rid of a Creditor, whom becauſe he knows not how to ſatisfie, he cares not to ſpeak with him. Conſideration is the great troubler and diſturber of men in an evil courſe, becauſe it would repreſent to them the plain truth of their caſe; and therefore they do all they can to keep it off, as thoſe who have improvidently managed their affairs, and been ill husbands of their eſtates, are loth to make

make up their accounts, leſt by that means they ſhould be forced to underſtand the worſt of their condition.

Or if conſideration happen to take them at an advantage, and they are ſo hard preſt by it that they cannot eſcape the ſight of their own condition, yet they find themſelves ſo miſerably entangled and hamper'd in an evil courſe, and bound ſo faſt in the chains of their own wickedneſs, that they know not how to get looſe. Sin is the ſaddeſt ſlavery in the World; it breaks and ſinks mens Spirits, and makes them ſo baſe and ſervile that they have not the courage to reſcue themſelves. No ſort of ſlaves are ſo poor ſpirited as they that are in bondage to their luſts. Their power is gone, or if they have any left they have not the heart to make uſe of it. And though they ſee and feel their miſery, yet they chuſe rather to ſit down in it, and tamely to ſubmit to it, than to make any reſolute attempt for their Liberty. What the *Prophet* ſays of *Whoredom* and *Wine* is proportionably true of other vices, *they take away the heart.* Every luſt that we entertain deals with us as *Dalilah* did with *Sampſon*, not only robs us of our ſtrength but leaves us faſt bound: ſo that if at a-

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ny time we be awakened to a ſenſe of our condition, and try to reſcue our ſelves from it, we find that *our ſtrength is departed from us*, and that we are not able to break looſe.

And as long cuſtom and continuance in ſin deprives us of our ſtrength, ſo it diſcourageth our hopes, both of God's grace and aſſiſtance, and of his mercy and forgiveneſs. For why ſhould men expect the continuance of that grace which they have ſo often received in vain? After ſo many provocations, how can we look the offended Majeſty of God in the Face? how can we lift up our eyes to heaven with any hopes of mercy and forgiveneſs there? Deſpair doth almoſt naturally ſpring from an evil Conſcience: and when men are thoroughly awakened to a ſenſe of ſin, and of the infinite evil of it, as they cannot eaſily forgive themſelves, ſo they can hardly believe that there is goodneſs enough any where to forgive them.

But beſides theſe diſadvantages, which are natural and conſequent upon a vitious courſe; by the juſt judgment of God, his Spirit is withdrawn from them, and they are given up to their own hearts luſts, to commit all iniquity with greedineſs. And then there is hardly

any

any thing left, either to reſtrain them in their evil courſe, or to recover them out of it.

And not only ſo, but by the juſt permiſſion of God, as men grow worſe and more wicked, the Devil hath a nearer acceſs to them and a more immediate power over them. So the *Scripture* tells us, that wicked men are *led captive by Satan at his pleaſure*, and that the *evil one works* and acts *in the Children of diſobedience*: They are as it were poſſeſt and inſpired by him. And what can be expected from this cruel and malicious enemy of mankind, but that he will continually be puſhing them on from one wickedneſs to another, till he drive them firſt into deſpair, and then, if God permit him, into eternal perdition?

And what a forlorn ſtate is this? when men are thus forſaken of God, and left without check, blindly and headily to follow the ſway of their own tempers, and the bent of their own corrupt hearts? when they are continually expoſed to temptations ſtrongly inviting them to evil; and God lets the Devil looſe upon them to manage thoſe temptations with his utmoſt skill, and to practiſe all his arts and wiles upon them? In theſe circum-

cumſtances men almoſt infallibly run into ſin, as ſure as men wander in the dark, and are in danger of falling in ſlippery places, and of being entangled when they continually walk in the midſt of ſnares cunningly laid for them. It is not in men thus diſabled and entangled, to order their own ſteps, and to reſtrain their inclinations and paſſions in the preſence of a powerfull temptation. At the beſt, we need God's direction to guide us, his continual grace to uphold us, and to guard and preſerve us from evil; and much more do we ſtand in need of it, when we have brought our ſelves into theſe wretched circumſtances; but then alas! how little reaſon have we to hope for it?

Blind and miſerable men! that in deſpite of all the mercifull warnings of God's word and providence, will run themſelves into this deſperate ſtate, and never think of returning to a better mind, till their retreat is difficult almoſt to an impoſſibility. I proceed to the

II. II. Head of my Diſcourſe, which was to ſhew that the caſe of theſe perſons, though it be extremely difficult, is not quite deſperate; but after all, there is ſome ground of hope and encouragement left

left that they may yet be reclaimed and brought to goodneſs. Indeed humanely ſpeaking, and according to all appearance and probability, the thing ſeems to be very hopeleſs, and next to an impoſſibility; but yet what our *Saviour* ſays concerning the difficulty of a rich man's Salvation will reach alſo to this caſe, though much more difficult; *thoſe things which are impoſſible with men are poſſible with God.*

And this will appear, if we conſider that even in the worſt of men there is ſomething left which tends to reclaim them, to awaken them to conſideration, and to urge and encourage them to a vigorous reſolution of a better courſe: And this accompanied with a powerfull aſſiſtance of God's grace, which when ſincerely ſought is never to be deſpaired of, may prove effectual to bring back even the greateſt of ſinners.

1. There is left, even in the worſt of men, a natural ſenſe of the evil and unreaſonableneſs of ſin; which can hardly be ever totally extinguiſhed in humane nature. For though the habits of great vices are very apt to harden and ſtupifie men, ſo that they have ſeldom a juſt ſence of their evil ways, yet theſe perſons are

ſometimes under ſtrong convictions, and their conſciences do ſeverely check and rebuke them for their faults. They are alſo, by fits, under great apprehenſion of the danger of their condition, and that the courſe which they are in, if they continue in it, will prove fatal to them, and ruine them at laſt: Eſpecially, when their conſciences are throughly awakened, by ſome great affliction, or the near approach of death and a lively ſenſe of another World. And the apprehenſion of a mighty danger will make men to look about them, and to uſe the beſt means to avoid it.

2. Very bad men when they have any thoughts of becoming better are apt to conceive ſome good hopes of God's grace and mercy. For though they find all the cauſes and reaſons of deſpair in themſelves, yet the conſideration of the boundleſs goodneſs and compaſſions of God (how undeſerved ſoever on their part) is apt to kindle ſome ſparks of hope, even in the moſt deſponding mind. His wonderfull patience, in the midſt of our manifold provocations, cannot but be a good ſign to us, that he hath no mind that we ſhould periſh, but rather that we ſhould come to repentance; and if we do repent, we are aſſured by his promiſe,

promiſe, that we ſhall be forgiven. *He that confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins ſhall have mercy. If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithfull and juſt to forgive us our ſins and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.*

3. Who knows what men throughly rouzed and ſtartled may reſolve, and do? And a mighty reſolution will break through difficulties which ſeem inſuperable. Though we be weak and pitifull Creatures; yet nature when it is mightily irritated and ſtirr'd will do ſtrange things. The reſolutions of men upon the brink of deſpair, have been of an incredible force: and the Soul of man in nothing more diſcovers its divine power and original, than in that ſpring which is in it whereby it recovers it ſelf when it is mightily urged and preſt. There is a ſort of reſolution which is in a manner invincible, and hardly any difficulty can reſiſt it or ſtand before it.

Of this there have been great inſtances in ſeveral kinds. Some by an obſtinate reſolution, and taking incredible pains with themſelves, have maſtered great natural vices and defects. As *Socrates* and *Demoſthenes*, who almoſt exceeded all mankind in thoſe two things for which by nature they ſeemed to be

leaſt made, and moſt unfit. One, in governing of his paſſions, and the other in the mighty force and power of his eloquence.

Some, that by intemperance have brought themſelves to a dropſie, which hath juſt ſet them upon the brink of the grave, by a bold and ſteady purpoſe to abſtain wholly from drink for a long time together, have reſcued themſelves from the jaws of death.

Some that had almoſt ruined themſelves by a careleſs and diſſolute life, and having run themſelves out of their eſtates into debt, and being caſt into priſon, have there taken up a manly reſolution to retrieve and recover themſelves; and by the indefatigable labour and ſtudy of ſome years, in that uncomfortable retreat, have maſtered the knowledge and skill of one of the moſt difficult Profeſſions, in which they have afterwards proved great and eminent.

And ſome, in the full carriere of a wicked courſe, have by a ſudden thought and reſolution, raiſed in them and aſſiſted by a mighty grace of God, taken up preſently and made an immediate change from great wickedneſs and impiety of life to a very exemplary degree of goodneſs and vertue.

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The two great encouragements to vertue which *Pythagoras* gave to his Scholars were theſe; and they were worthy of ſo great a Philoſopher; *Firſt, Chuſe always the beſt courſe of life, and cuſtome will ſoon make it the moſt pleaſant.* The *other* was this, that *Power and Neceſſity are Neighbours* and *never dwell far from one another.* When men are preſt by a great neceſſity, when nature is ſpurr'd up and urged to the utmoſt, men diſcover in themſelves a power which they thought they had not, and find at laſt that they can do that which at firſt they deſpaired of ever being able to do.

4. The grace and aſſiſtance of God when ſincerely ſought, is never to be deſpaired of. So that if we do but heartily and in good earneſt reſolve upon a better courſe and implore the help of God's grace to this purpoſe, no degree of it that is neceſſary ſhall be wanting to us. And here is our chief ground of hope. For we are *weak and unſtable as water*; and when we have taken up good reſolutions do eaſily ſtart from them. So that freſh ſupplies, and a continued aſſiſtance of God's grace is neceſſary to keep up the firſt warmth and vigour of our reſolutions, till they prove effectual and

victorious. And this grace God hath promiſed he will not deny to us, when we are thus diſpoſed for it; that he *will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it*; that *he will not quench the ſmoaking flax, nor break the bruiſed reed, untill he bring forth judgment unto victory.*

All that now remains is to apply this to our ſelves: And we are all concerned in it: For we ſhall all find our ſelves comprehended under one of theſe three Heads. Either we are of the number of thoſe few happy Perſons, who by the influence and advantage of a good education were never engaged in a bad courſe: Or, of thoſe who have been drawn into vice, but are not yet far gone in it: Or, of thoſe who have been long accuſtomed to an evil courſe, and are grown old and ſtiff in it.

The firſt of theſe having great cauſe to thank God for this ſingular felicity, that they were never enſnared and intangled in vitious habits, that they have not had the trial of their own weakneſs under this miſerable ſlavery, that they never knew what it was to be out of their own power, to have loſt their liberty and the Government of themſelves. When we

hear

hear of the miſerable ſervitude of the poor Chriſtians in *Turkey*, we are apt, as there is great reaſon, to pity them, and to think what a bleſſing of God it is to us that we are not in their condition: And yet *that* ſlavery is not comparable to *this*, either for the ſad nature, or the diſmal *conſequences* of it; or for the difficulty of being releaſed from it. And let ſuch Perſons, who have been thus happy never to have been engaged in an evil courſe, preſerve their innocency with great tenderneſs and care, as the greateſt Jewel in the World. No Man knows what he do's, and what a foundation of trouble he lays to himſelf, when he forfeits his innocency, and breaks the peace of his own mind; when he yields to a Temptation, and makes the firſt ſtep into a bad courſe. He little thinks whither his luſts may hurry him, and what a monſter they may make of him before they have done with him.

2. Thoſe who have been ſeduced, but are not yet deeply engaged in an evil courſe, let them make a ſpeedy retreat, leſt they put it for ever out of their power to return. Perhaps their feet only are yet enſnared, but their hands are at

liberty, and they have ſome power left, whereby with an ordinary grace of God they may looſe and reſcue themſelves. But after a while their hands may be manacled, and all their power may be gone; and when they are thus *bound hand and foot*, they are juſt prepared, and in danger every moment, *to be caſt into utter darkneſs.*

3. As for thoſe, who are gone very far and are grown old in vice, who can forbear to lament over them? for they are a ſad ſpectacle indeed, and the trueſt object of pity in the World. And yet, *their* recovery is not utterly to be deſpaired of; for *with God it is poſſible.* The Spirit of God, which hath withdrawn himſelf, or rather hath been driven away by them, may yet be perſuaded to return and to undertake them once more, if they would but ſeriouſly reſolve upon a change, and heartily beg God's aſſiſtance to that purpoſe. If we would take up a mighty reſolution, we might hope that God would afford a miraculous grace to ſecond it, and make it effectual to our recovery. Even in this perverſe and degenerate Age in which we live, God hath not been wanting to give ſome miraculous inſtances of his grace and mercy to ſinners,

ſinners, and thoſe perhaps equal to any of thoſe we meet with in Scripture, of *Manaſſes*, or *Mary Magdalen*, or the *penitent Thief*; both for the greatneſs of the offenders, and the miracle of their change: To the end that none might deſpair, and for want of the encouragement of an example equal to their own caſe, be diſheartned from ſo noble an enterprize. I am loth to put you in mind how bad ſome have been, who yet have been *ſnatched as Firebrands out of the fire*; and that in ſo ſtrange a manner, that it would even amaze a Man to think of the wonder of their recovery: thoſe who have ſunk themſelves into the very depth of infidelity and wickedneſs, have by a mighty hand and out-ſtretched arm of God been pluckt out of this horrible Pit. And will we ſtill ſtand it out with God, when ſuch great Leaders have given up the cauſe, and have ſurrendred and yielded up themſelves willing Captives to the grace of God? that omnipotent grace of God, which can eaſily ſubdue the ſtouteſt heart of Man, by letting in ſo ſtrong a light upon our minds, and pouring ſuch terrible convictions into our conſciences, that we can find no eaſe but in turning to God.

I hope

I hope there are none here ſo bad, as to need all the encouragement to repentance which ſuch examples might give them: encouragement I ſay to repentance: for ſurely theſe examples can encourage no Man to venture any farther in a wicked courſe: they are ſo very rare, and like the inſtances of thoſe who have been brought back to life after the ſentence of death ſeemed to have been fully executed upon them.

But perhaps ſome will not believe that there have been ſuch examples; or if there have, they impute all this either to a diſturbed imagination, or to the faint and low ſpirits of Men under great bodily weakneſs, or to their natural cowardize and fear; or to I know not what fooliſh and fantaſtical deſign of completing and finiſhing a wicked life with an hypocritical death. Nothing ſurely is eaſier than to put ſome bad conſtruction upon the beſt things, and ſo ſlurr even repentance it ſelf, and almoſt daſh it out of countenance by ſome bold, and perhaps witty ſaying about it. But oh that Men were wiſe; oh that Men were wiſe! that they underſtood, and would conſider their latter end! Come, let us neither trifle, nor diſſemble in this matter; I dare ſay every man's

man's Conſcience is convinced, that they who have led very ill lives have ſo much reaſon for repentance, that we may eaſily believe it to be real. However, of all things in the world, let us not make a mock of repentance; that which muſt be our laſt ſanctuary and refuge, and which we muſt all come to before we die, or *it had been better for us we had never been born.* Therefore, *let my counſel be acceptable unto you, break off your ſins by repentance,* and *your iniquities by righteouſneſs:* And that inſtantly, and without delay; *leſt any of you be hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* If we have been enſlaved but a little to a vitious courſe, we ſhall find it a task difficult enough to aſſert our own liberty, to *break theſe bonds in ſunder and to caſt theſe cords from us:* But if we have been long under this bondage, we have done ſo much to undoe our ſelves, and to make our caſe deſperate, that it is God's infinite mercy to us that there is yet hope. Therefore, *give glory to the Lord your God, before he cauſe darkneſs, and your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains, and while you look for light, he turn it into darkneſs and the ſhadow of death.* I will conclude with that encouraging invitation, even to the greateſt

teſt of ſinners, to repentance, from the mouth of God himſelf, *Iſa.* 55. *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your Soul ſhall live: ſeek the Lord while he may be found; and call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.*

To him let us apply our ſelves, and humbly beſeech him, *who is mighty to ſave*, that he would ſtretch forth the right hand of his power for our deliverance, from this miſerable and cruel bondage of our luſts: and that *as the rain cometh down from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud*; ſo he would grant that *his word may not return void, but accompliſh his pleaſure, and proſper in the thing to which he ſent it*; For his mercy ſake in Jeſus Chriſt, *To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all honour and glory now and for ever.* Amen.

MATT.

MATTHEW XXIII. 13.

Woe unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites; for ye ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men; and ye neither go in your ſelves, neither ſuffer ye them that are entring to go in.

THE *Scribes* ſo often mentioned in the *Goſpel*, were the great Doctors among the *Jews*, the Teachers and Interpreters of the Law of God. And becauſe many of them were of the Sect of the *Phariſees*, which above all others pretended to skill and knowledge in the Law, therefore it is that our bleſſed *Saviour* do's ſo often put the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* together. And theſe were the men of chief Authority in the *Jewiſh* Church; who equalled their own unwritten word and traditions with the Law of God: Nay our *Saviour* tells us, *they made the Commandments of God of none effect by their traditions.* They did in effect aſſume to themſelves *infallibility*; and all that oppoſed

poſed and contradicted them they branded with the odious name of *Hereticks*. Againſt theſe our *Saviour* denounceth this Woe here in the *Text*, *Woe unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites; for ye ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men*, &c.

All the difficulty in the words is, what is here meant by *ſhutting up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men*: St. *Luke* expreſſeth it more plainly, *Ye have taken away the key of knowledge, ye entred not in your ſelves, and them that were entring in, ye hindered.* By putting theſe two expreſſions together we ſhall the more eaſily come at the meaning of the *Text*. *Ye have taken away the key of knowledge*, and *have ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men.* This Metaphor of *the key of knowledge* is undoubtedly an alluſion to that known cuſtome among the *Jews* in the admiſſion of their Doctors. For to whomſoever they gave Authority to interpret the Law and the Prophets, they were ſolemnly admitted into that office by delivering to them a *Key* and a *Table-book*. So that by the *key of knowledge* is here meant the interpretation and underſtanding of the Scriptures; and by *taking away the key of knowledge*, not only that they arrogated to themſelves alone the underſtanding

ſtanding of the Scriptures, but likewiſe that they had conveyed away this key of knowledge, and as it were hid it out of the way, neither uſing it themſelves as they ought, nor ſuffering others to make uſe of it.

And thus they *ſhut the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men*; which is very fitly ſaid of thoſe who have locked the door againſt them that were going in, and have taken away the key. By all which it appears that the plain meaning of our *Saviour* in theſe Metaphorical expreſſions is, that the *Scribes* and Teachers of the Law, under a pretence of interpreting the Scriptures, had perverted them and kept the true knowledge of them from the People: Eſpecially thoſe Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* which concerned the *Meſſias*. And by this means the Kingdom of Heaven was ſhut againſt men: And they not only rejected the truth themſelves, but by keeping men in ignorance of the true meaning of the Scriptures, they hindered many from embracing our *Saviour*'s Doctrine, and entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, who were otherwiſe well enough diſpoſed for it.

Having thus explained the words, I ſhall from the main ſcope and deſign of them obſerve to you theſe two things.

1. The

1. The Neceſſity of the knowledge of the holy Scriptures in order to our eternal Salvation. It is called by our Saviour *the key of knowledge*, that which lets men into the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. The great and inexcuſable fault of thoſe who deprive the People of the knowledge of the holy Scriptures. They *ſhut the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men*, and do what in them lies to hinder their eternal Salvation; and therefore our *Saviour* denounceth ſo heavy a Woe againſt them.

I ſhall ſpeak briefly to theſe two *Obſervations*; and then apply them to thoſe who are principally concerned in them.

I. I. *Firſt*, I obſerve hence the Neceſſity of the knowledge of the holy Scriptures in order to our eternal Salvation. This is by our *Saviour* called *the key of knowledge*, that which lets men into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Knowledge is neceſſary to Religion: It is neceſſary to the Being of it; and neceſſary to the life and practice of it. *Without Faith* (ſays the *Apoſtle*) *itis impoſſible to pleaſe God:* Becauſe Faithis an act of the underſtanding, and do's neceſſarily ſuppoſe ſome knowledge and apprehenſion of what we believe. To all

acts

acts of Religion there is neceſſarily required ſome act of the Underſtanding; ſo that without knowledge there can be no devotion in the ſervice of God, no obedience to his Laws. Religion begins in the Underſtanding, and from thence deſcends upon the heart and life. *If ye know theſe things* (ſays our *Saviour*) *happy are ye if ye do them.* We muſt firſt know God, before we can worſhip him; and underſtand what is his will, before we can do it.

This is ſo very evident, that one would think there needed no diſcourſe about it. And yet there are ſome in the World that cry up Ignorance as the Mother of Devotion. And to ſhew that we do not wrong them in this matter, Mr. *Ruſhworth* in his *Dialogues* (a *Book* in great vogue among the *Papiſts* here in *England*) does expreſly reckon up *Ignorance* among *the Parents of Religion.* And can any thing be ſaid more abſurdly and more to the diſparagement of Religion, than to derive the pedegree of the moſt excellent thing in the world from ſo obſcure and ignoble an Original; and to make that which the Scripture calls *the beginning of wiſdom*, and *the excellency of knowledge*, to be the Off-ſpring of Ignorance and a Child of darkneſs? Ignorance indeed may be the

cauſe of wonder and admiration, and the mother of folly and ſuperſtition: But ſurely Religion is of a nobler Extraction, and is the iſſue and reſult of the beſt wiſdom and knowledge; and deſcends from above, from the giver of every good and perfect gift, even the father of lights.

And as knowledge in general is neceſſary to Religion, ſo more particularly the knowledge of the *Holy Scriptures* is neceſſary to our eternal Salvation. Becauſe theſe are the great and ſtanding Revelation of God to mankind; wherein the Nature of God, and his Will concerning our duty and the terms and conditions of our eternal happineſs in another World are fully and plainly declared to us.

The Scriptures are the Word of God; and from whence can we learn the Will of God ſo well as from his own mouth? They are the great inſtrument of our Salvation; and ſhould not every man be acquainted with that which alone can perfectly inſtruct him what he muſt believe, and what he muſt do that he may be ſaved? This is the teſtimony which the Scripture gives of it ſelf, that it is *able to make men wiſe unto ſalvation*: And is it not very fit that every man ſhould have this wiſdom, and in order thereunto the free

free uſe of that *Book* from whence this wiſdom is to be learned?

II. *Secondly*, I obſerve the great and inexcuſable fault of thoſe who keep men in Ignorance of Religion, and take away from them ſo excellent and neceſſary a means of divine knowledge as the *Holy Scriptures* are. This our *Saviour* calls *taking away the key of knowledge, and ſhutting the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men*, That is, doing what in them lies to render it impoſſible for men to be ſaved. For this he denounceth a terrible *Woe* againſt the Teachers of the *Jewiſh* Church: Though they did not proceed ſo far as to deprive men of the uſe of the *Holy Scriptures*, but only of the right knowledge and underſtanding of them. This alone is a horrible impiety, to lead men into a falſe ſenſe and interpretation of Scripture, but much greater to forbid them the reading of it. This is to ſtop knowledge at the very Fountain-head; and not only to lead men into Errour, but to take away from them all poſſibility of rectifying their miſtakes. And can there be a greater ſacrilege, than to rob men of the Word of God, the beſt means in the World of acquainting them with the Will of God II.

and their duty, and the way to eternal happineſs? To keep the people in Ignorance of that which is neceſſary to ſave them, is *to judge them unworthy of eternal life*, and to declare it do's not belong to them, and maliciouſly to contrive the eternal ruine and deſtruction of their Souls.

To lock up the *Scriptures* and the *ſervice of God* from the people in an unknown tongue, what is this but in effect to forbid men to know God and to ſerve him; to render them incapable of knowing what *is the good and acceptable will of God*; of joyning in his worſhip, or performing any part of it, or receiving any benefit or edification from it; And what is, if this be not, to ſhut the Kingdom of Heaven againſt men? This is ſo outragious a cruelty to the ſouls of men, that it is not to be excuſed upon any pretence whatſoever: This is to take the ſureſt and moſt effectual way in the world *to deſtroy thoſe for whom Chriſt died*, and directly to thwart the great deſign of God *our Saviour, who would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* Men may miſcarry with their knowledge, but they are ſure to periſh for want of it.

The beſt things in the world have their inconveniencies attending them, and are liable

liable to be abuſed; but ſurely men are not to be ruined and damned for fear of abuſing their knowledge, or for the prevention of any other inconvenience whatſoever. Beſides, this is to croſs the very end of the Scriptures, and the deſign of God in inſpiring men to write them. Can any man think that God ſhould ſend this great light of his Word into the world, for the Prieſts to *hide it under a buſhel*; and not rather that it ſhould be ſet up to the greateſt advantage for the enlightening of the world? St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 15. 4. That *whatſoever things were written, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* And 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. *That all Scripture is given by inſpiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs.* And if the Scriptures were written for theſe ends, can any man have the face to pretend that they do not concern the people as well as their teachers? Nay St. *Paul* expreſly tells the Church of *Rome*, that they were written for their learning, however it happens that they are not now permitted to make uſe of them. Are the *Scriptures* ſo uſefull and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for

inſtruction in righteouſneſs? and why may they not be uſed by the people for thoſe ends for which they were given? 'Tis true indeed they are fit for the moſt knowing and learned, and ſufficient to make *the man of God perfect, and throughly furniſhed to every good work* (as the *Apoſtle* there tells us.) But do's this exclude their being profitable alſo to the people; who may reaſonably be preſumed to ſtand much more in need of all means and helps of inſtruction than their Teachers? And though there be many difficulties and obſcurities in the Scriptures, enough to exerciſe the skill and wit of the learned, yet are they not therefore either uſeleſs or dangerous to the People. The ancient *Fathers* of the Church were of another mind. St. *Chryſoſtome* tells us that, "Whatever things are ne-"ceſſary are manifeſt in the Scriptures. "And St. *Auſtin*, that all things are plain "in the Scripture, which concern faith "and a good life; and that thoſe things "which are neceſſary to the Salvation of "men, are not ſo hard to be come at, but "that as to thoſe things which the Scrip-"ture plainly contains, it ſpeaks without "diſguiſe like a familiar friend to the "heart of the learned and unlearned.

And

And upon theſe and ſuch like conſiderations, the *Fathers* did every-where in their *Orations* and *Homilies* charge and exhort the people to be converſant in the Holy Scriptures, to reade them daily and diligently and attentively. And I challenge our *Adverſaries* to ſhew me where any of the ancient *Fathers* do diſcourage the people from reading the Scriptures, much leſs forbid them ſo to do. So that they who do it now have no Cloak for their ſin: And they who pretend ſo confidently to *Antiquity* in other caſes, are by the evidence of truth forced to acknowledge that it is againſt them in this. Though they have ten thouſand *Schoolmen* on their ſide, yet have they not one *Father*, not the leaſt pretence of Scripture, or rag of Antiquity to cover their nakedneſs in this point.

With great reaſon then do's our *Saviour* denounce ſo heavy a *Woe* againſt ſuch teachers. Of old in the like caſe God by his *Prophet* ſeverely threatens the Prieſts of the *Jewiſh Church*, for not inſtructing the people in the knowledge of God, *Hoſea* 4. 6. *My people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge: becauſe thou haſt rejected knowledge, I will alſo reject thee; thou ſhalt be no more a Prieſt to me: ſeeing thou haſt forgotten the Law of thy God, I will alſo for-*

get thy Children. God, you ſee, lays the ruine of ſo many Souls at their doors, and will require their blood at their hands. So many as periſh for want of knowledge, and eternally miſcarry by being deprived of the neceſſary means of Salvation, their deſtruction ſhall be charged upon thoſe who *have taken away the key of knowledge, and ſhut the kingdom of heaven againſt men.*

And it is juſt with God to puniſh ſuch perſons, not only as the occaſion, but as the Authours of their ruine. For who can judge otherwiſe, but that they who deprive men of the neceſſary means to any end, do purpoſely deſign to hinder them of attaining that end? And whatever may be pretended in this caſe; to deprive men of the Holy Scriptures, and to keep them ignorant of the ſervice of God, and yet while they do ſo, to make a ſhew of an earneſt deſire of their Salvation, is juſt ſuch a mockery, as if one of you that is a maſter ſhould tell his prentice how much you deſire he ſhould thrive in the world, and be a rich man, but all the while keeps him ignorant of his trade in order to his being rich; and with the ſtricteſt care imaginable conceals from him the beſt means of learning that whereby alone he is likely to thrive and get an eſtate. *Woe*

unto

unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites.

By what hath been diſcourſed upon this Argument, you will eaſily perceive where the Application is like to fall. For the *Woe* denounced by our *Saviour* here in the *Text* againſt the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, falls every whit as heavy upon the *Paſtours* and *Teachers* of the *Roman* Church. They have taken away the key of knowledge with a witneſs; not only depriving the people of the right underſtanding of the Scriptures, but of the very uſe of them: As if they were ſo afraid they ſhould underſtand them, that they dare not ſuffer ſo much as to be acquainted with them.

This Tyranny *that* Church hath exerciſed over thoſe of her Communion for ſeveral hundreds of years. It grew upon them indeed by degrees: For as by the inundation of *Barbarous* Nations upon the *Roman* Empire the *Romans* loſt their Language by degrees, ſo the Governours of that Church ſtill kept up the Scriptures and the ſervice of God in the *Latin tongue*; which at laſt was wholly unknown to the common people. And about the *ninth* and *tenth Centuries*, when by the general conſent of all their own *Hiſtorians* groſs darkneſs and ignorance covered this part of the world, the *Pope* and the *Prieſts* took away

away the *key of knowledge*, and did (as I may ſo ſay) put it under the door for ſeveral Ages; till the *Reformation* fetched it out again, and rubbed off the ruſt of it.

And I profeſs ſeriouſly that hardly any thing in the world, was ever to me more aſtoniſhing, than this uncharitable and cruel uſage of the people in the Church of *Rome*. And I cannot tell which to wonder at moſt, the inſolence of their Governours in impoſing upon men this ſenſleſs way of ſerving God, or the patience ſhall I call it, or rather ſtupidity of the people in enduring to be ſo intolerably abuſed. Why ſhould reaſonable creatures be treated at this rude and barbarous rate? As if they were unworthy to be acquainted with the Will of God; and as if that which every man ought to do, were not fit for every man to know: As if the common people had only Bodies to be preſent at the ſervice of God, but no Souls; or as if they were all diſtracted and out of their wits, and it were a dangerous thing to let in the light upon them.

But to ſpeak more diſtinctly. There are *two* things we charge them withall, and which they are not able to deny. Their performing the publick *ſervice of God* in an unknown Tongue; and depri-

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ving the People of the uſe of the *Scriptures*. And I ſhall firſt tell you what we have to ſay againſt theſe things, and then conſider what they pretend for them.

1. As for their performing the ſervice of God in a tongue unknown to the People. And I begin with St. *Paul*, who in his firſt *Epiſtle* to the *Corinthians* hath a whole *Chapter* on purpoſe to ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of this thing, and how contrary it is to the edification of *Chriſtians*. His diſcourſe is ſo plain and ſo well known, that I ſhall not particularly inſiſt upon it. *Eraſmus*, in his *Annotations* upon this *Chapter*, breaks out, as well he might) into admiration at the practice of the Church of *Rome* in his time. *Hâc in re mirum quam mutata ſit Eccleſiæ conſuetudo:* "It is wonderfull (ſays he) how the cuſtom of the Church is altered in this matter. St. *Paul had rather ſpeak five words with underſtanding, and ſo as to teach others, than ten thouſand in an unknown tongue.* Why do's the Church doubt to follow ſo great an Authority, or rather how dares ſhe to diſſent from it?

As for the practice of the ancient Church let *Origen* bear witneſs. "The *Grecians* (ſaith he) in their prayers uſe the *Greek*, and the *Romans* the *Latin* tongue;

" tongue; and ſo every one according " to his Language prayeth unto God, and " praiſeth him as he is able.

And not only in *Origen*'s time, but for more than the firſt ſix hundred years, the ſervice of God was always performed in a known Tongue. And this the learned men of their own Church do not deny. And Cardinal *Cajetan* (as *Caſſander* tells us) ſaid it was much better this Cuſtom were reſtored; and being reproved for ſaying ſo, he ſaid he learned it from St. *Paul*. And *Bellarmine* himſelf confeſſeth that the *Armenians*, *Egyptians*, *Ethiopians*, *Ruſſians*, and others do uſe their own Language in their Liturgies at this day.

But it is otherwiſe now in the Church of *Rome*, and hath been for ſeveral Ages. And it ſeems they lay great ſtreſs upon it, not only as a thing of great Uſe, but Neceſſity. For Pope *Gregory* the VII. forbids the Prince of *Bohemia* to permit to the People the celebration of divine Offices in the *Sclavonian* Tongue; and commands him to oppoſe them herein with all his Forces. It ſeems he thought it a cauſe worthy the fighting for: and that it were much better the People ſhould be killed, than ſuffered to underſtand their prayers.

But let us reaſon this matter a little calmly

calmly with them. Is it neceſſary for men to underſtand any thing they do in Religion? And is not Prayer one of the moſt ſolemn parts of Religion? and why then ſhould not men underſtand their Prayers as well as any thing elſe they do in Religion? Is it good that people ſhould underſtand their private Prayers? that (we thank them) they allow: and why not the publick as well? Is there leſs of Religion in publick Prayers? is God leſs honoured by them? or are we not as capable of being edified and of having our hearts and affections moved and excited by them? Where then lies the difference? The more I conſider it the more I am at a loſs what tolerable reaſon any man can give why people ſhould not underſtand their publick devotions as well as their private. If men cannot heartily and devoutly pray alone, without underſtanding what they ask of God, no more (ſay I) can they heartily and devoutly join in the publick Prayers which are made by the Prieſt without underſtanding what they are. If it be enough for the Prieſt to underſtand them, why ſhould not the Prieſt only be preſent at them? unleſs the people do not meet to worſhip God, but only to wait upon the Prieſt. But by ſaying

ing the Prieſt underſtands them, it ſeems it is better ſome body ſhould underſtand them than not; and why is not that which is good for the Prieſt good for the people?

So that the true ſtate of the *Controverſie* is, whether it be fit that the people ſhould be edified in the ſervice of God; and whether it be fit the Church ſhould order things contrary to edification? For it is plain that the ſervice of God in an unknown tongue is uſeleſs and unprofitable to the People: Nay, it is evidently no publick ſervice of God, when the Prieſt only underſtands it. For how can they be ſaid to be *publick prayers* if the People do not join in them? and how can they join in that they do not underſtand? and to what purpoſe are *Leſſons* of *Scripture* read, if people are to learn nothing by them? and how ſhould they learn when they do not underſtand? This is as if one ſhould pretend to teach a man *Greek*, by reading him Lectures every day out of an *Arabick* and *Perſian* Book, of which he underſtands not one ſyllable.

II. As to their depriving the people of the uſe of the *Holy Scriptures*. Our bleſſed *Saviour* exhorts the *Jews* to *ſearch the Scriptures*; And St. *Paul* chargeth the Chriſtians that *the word of God ſhould dwell richly*

richly in them; And the ancient *Fathers* of the Church do moſt frequently and earneſtly recommend to the People the reading and ſtudy of the Scriptures: How comes the caſe now to be ſo altered? ſure the word of God is not changed: that certainly abides and continues the ſame for ever.

I ſhall by and by examine what the Church of *Rome* pretends in excuſe of this Sacrilege. In the mean time I do not ſee what conſiderable Objections can be made againſt the People's reading of the Scriptures, which would not have held as well againſt the writing and publiſhing of them at firſt in a Language underſtood by the People: As the *Old Teſtament* was by the *Jews*, and the *Epiſtles* of the *Apoſtles* by the *Churches* to whom they were written, and the *Goſpels* both by *Jews* and *Greeks*. Were there no difficulties and obſcurities then in the *Scriptures*, capable of being wreſted by the unſtable and unlearned? were not people then liable to errour, and was there no danger of Hereſie in thoſe Times? And yet theſe are their great Objections againſt putting the Scriptures into the hands of the people. Which is juſt like their arguing againſt giving the Cup to the Laity from the inconveniency

conveniency of their *beards*, leſt ſome of the conſecrated wine ſhould be ſpilt upon them: As if *errours* and *beards* were inconveniencies lately ſprung up in the world, and which mankind were not liable to in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity.

But if there were the ſame dangers and inconveniencies in all Ages, this Reaſon makes againſt the publiſhing of the Scriptures to the people at firſt, as much as againſt permitting them the uſe of them now. And in truth all theſe objections are againſt the Scripture it ſelf: And that which the Church of *Rome* would find fault with if they durſt, is, that there ſhould be any ſuch *Book* in the world, and that it ſhould be in any bodies hands, learned or unlearned; for if it be dangerous to any, none are ſo capable of doing miſchief with it as men of wit and learning. So that at the bottom, if they would ſpeak out, the quarrel is againſt the Scriptures themſelves. This is too evident by the counſel given to Pope *Julius* the III. by the Biſhops met at *Bononia* to conſult about the eſtabliſhment of the *Roman* See: Where among other things they give this as their laſt advice, and as the greateſt and weightieſt of all, *That by all means as little of the Goſpel as might*

might be, especially in the Vulgar Tongue, should be read to the people; and that *little which was in the* Mass *ought to be sufficient: neither should it be permitted to any mortal to reade more. For so long* (say they) *as men were contented with that little, all things went well with them; but quite otherwise, since more was commonly read.* And speaking of the Scripture, they give this remarkable testimony and commendation of it; *This in short is that Book which, above all others, hath raised those tempests and whirlwinds which we were almost carried away with. And in truth, if any one diligently considers it, and compares it with what is done in our Church, he will find them very contrary to each other, and our Doctrine not only to be very different from it, but repugnant to it.* If this be the case, they do like the rest of the Children of this world, prudently enough in their Generation: Can we blame them for being against the Scriptures, when the Scriptures are acknowledged to be so clearly against them? But surely no body that considereth these things would be of that *Church*, which is brought by the undeniable evidence of the things themselves to this shamefull confession, *that* several of their Doctrines and Practices are very contrary to the Word of God.

Much more might have been ſaid againſt the practice of the Church of *Rome* in theſe two particulars, but this is ſufficient.

I ſhall in the *ſecond* place conſider, what is pretended for them. And indeed what can be pretended in juſtification of ſo contumelious an affront to mankind, ſo great a Tyranny and cruelty to the Souls of men? hath God forbidden the People to look into the Scriptures? No; quite contrary. Was it the practice of the ancient Church to lay this reſtraint upon men; or to celebrate the ſervice of God in an unknown Tongue? our adverſaries themſelves have not the face to pretend this. I ſhall truly repreſent the ſubſtance of what they ſay in theſe *two* points.

I. As to the ſervice of God in an unknown tongue they ſay theſe *four* things for themſelves.

1. That the people do exerciſe a general devotion, and come with an intention to ſerve God; and that is accepted, though they do not particularly underſtand the prayers that are made, and the leſſons that are read.

But is this all that is intended in the ſervice of God? do's not St. *Paul* expreſly require more? *that* the underſtanding of the

the people ſhould be edified by the particular ſervice that is performed? And if what is done be not particularly underſtood, he tells us the People are not edified, nor can ſay *Amen* to the prayers and thankſgivings that are put up to God; and that any man that ſhould come in and find people ſerving of God in this unprofitable and unreaſonable manner would conclude that they were mad.

And if there be any general devotion in the people, it is becauſe in general they underſtand what they are about; and why may they not as well underſtand the particular ſervice that is performed, that ſo they might exerciſe a particular devotion. So that they are devout no farther than they underſtand; and conſequently as to what they do not underſtand, had every whit as good be abſent.

2. They ſay, the prayers are to God, and he underſtands them; and that is enough. But what harm were it, if all they that pray underſtood them alſo? Or indeed how can men pray to God without underſtanding what they ask of him? Is not prayer a part of the Chriſtian worſhip? and is not that a reaſonable ſervice? and is any ſervice reaſonable that is not directed by our underſtandings, and accom-

panied with our hearts and affections?

But then what ſay they to the *Leſſons* and Exhortations of Scripture, which are likewiſe read to the people in an unknown tongue? Are theſe directed to God, or to the people only? And are they not deſigned by God for their inſtruction; and read either to that purpoſe or to none? And is it poſſible to inſtruct men by what they do not underſtand? This is a new and wonderfull way of teaching, by concealing from the people the things which they ſhould learn. Is it not all one, as to all purpoſes of edification, as if the Scriptures were not read, or any thing elſe in the place of them? as they many times do their Legends, which the wiſer ſort among them do not believe when they reade them. For all things are alike to them that underſtand none; as all things are of a colour in the dark. Ignorance knows no difference of things; it is only knowledge that can diſtinguiſh.

3. They ſay that ſome do, at leaſt in ſome meaſure, underſtand the particular prayers. If they do, that is no thanks to them. It is by accident if they are more knowing than the reſt; and more than the Church either deſires or intends. For if they deſired it, they might order their ſervice

vice ſo, as every man might underſtand it.

4. They ſay that it is convenient that God ſhould be ſerved and worſhipped in the ſame Language all the world over. Convenient for whom: For *God?* or for the *People?* Not for *God* ſurely. For he underſtands all other Languages as well as *Latin*, and for any thing we know to the contrary likes them as well. And certainly it cannot be ſo convenient for the *People*, becauſe they generally underſtand no Language but their own; and it is very inconvenient they ſhould not underſtand what they do in the ſervice of God. But perhaps they mean that it is convenient for the *Roman* Church to have it ſo; becauſe this will look like an argument that they are the *Catholick* or univerſal Church, when the Language which was originally theirs ſhall be the univerſal Language in which all Nations ſhall ſerve God; and by this means alſo they may bring all Nations to be of their Religion, and yet make them never the wiſer; and this is a very great convenience, becauſe knowledge is a troubleſome thing, and ignorance very quiet and peaceable, rendring men fit to be governed, and unfit to diſpute.

II. As to their depriving the people of the Scriptures, the ſumm of what they ſay may be reduced to theſe *three* Heads.

1. That the Church can give leave to men to reade the Scriptures. But this not without great trouble and difficulty: there muſt be a Licence for it under the hand of the Biſhop or Inquiſitor, by the advice of the Prieſt or Confeſſor, concerning the fitneſs of the Perſon that deſires this privilege; And we may be ſure they will think none fit, but thoſe of whom they have the greateſt confidence and ſecurity: And whoever preſumes to do it otherwiſe, is to be denied abſolution; which is, as much as in them lies, to damn men for preſuming to reade the Word of God without their leave.

And, whatever they may allow here in *England*, where they hold their people upon more ſlippery terms, yet this privilege is very rarely granted where they are in full poſſeſſion of their power, and have the people perfectly under their Yoke.

2. They tell us they inſtruct the people otherwiſe. This indeed were ſomething if they did it to purpoſe; but generally they do it very ſparingly and ſlightly. Their Sermons are commonly made up of feigned ſtories and miracles of *Saints*, and Exhortations to the worſhip of them (and

(and especially of the blessed *Virgin*) and of their Images and Relicks. And for the truth of this I appeal to the innumerable Volumes of their *Sermons* and *Postils* in print; which I suppose are none of their worst. I am sure *Erasmus* says that in his time in several Countries the people did scarce once in half a year hear a profitable Sermon to exhort them to true piety. Indeed they allow the people some *Catechisms* and *Manuals* of devotion; and yet in many of them they have the conscience and the confidence to *steal away the second Commandment* in the face of the *eighth*.

But, to bring the matter to a point, if those helps of instruction are agreeable to the Scriptures, why are they so afraid the people should reade the Scriptures? if they are not, why do they deceive and delude them?

3. They say that people are apt to wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, and that the promiscuous use of them hath been the great occasion of Heresies. It cannot be denied to be the condition of the very best things in the world, that they are liable to be abused: health and light and liberty, as well as knowledge. But must all these be therefore taken away? This very inconvenience of peoples wresting

the Scriptures to their own ruine St. *Peter* takes notice of in his days; but he do's not therefore forbid men the reading of them, as his more prudent Succeſſours have done ſince. Suppoſe the reading of the Scriptures hath been the occaſion of Hereſies; were there ever more than in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity? and yet neither the Apoſtles nor their Succeſſours ever preſcribed this remedy. But are they in earneſt? muſt not men know the truth for fear of falling into Errour? Becauſe men may poſſibly miſs their way at noon-day, muſt they never travel but in the night, when they are ſure to loſe it?

And when all is done, this is not true, that Hereſies have ſprung from this cauſe. They have generally been broached by the learned, from whom the Scriptures neither were, nor could be concealed. And for this I appeal to the Hiſtory and Experience of all Ages. I am well aſſured the ancient Fathers were of another mind. St. *Chryſoſtome* ſays, *If men would be converſant in the Scriptures, and attend to them, they would not only not fall into errours themſelves, but reſcue thoſe that are deceived:* And that *the Scriptures would inſtruct men both in right opinions and a good life.* And St. *Hierome* more expreſly to our purpoſe.

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That *infinite evils ariſe from the Ignorance of the Scriptures*; and *that from that cauſe the moſt part of Hereſies have come.*

But if what they ſay were true, is not this to lay the blame of all the ancient Hereſies upon the ill management of things by our *Saviour*, and his *Apoſtles*, and the holy *Fathers* of the Church for ſo many Ages, and their imprudent diſpenſing of the Scriptures to the people. This indeed is to charge the matter home; and yet this conſequence is unavoidable. For the Church of *Rome* cannot juſtifie the piety and prudence of their preſent practices, without accuſing all theſe.

But the thing which they mainly rely upon as to both theſe practices is this. That though theſe things were otherwiſe in the *Apoſtles* times, and in the *Antient Church*, yet the Church hath power to alter them according to the exigence and circumſtances of time. I have purpoſely reſerved this for the laſt place, becauſe it is their laſt refuge; and if this fail them they are gone.

To ſhew the weakneſs of this pretence, we will, if they pleaſe, take it for granted, that the Governours of the Church have in no Age more power, than the Apoſtles had in theirs. Now St. *Paul* tells

tells us, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. that the Authority which the Apoſtles had given them from the Lord was only *for edification but not for deſtruction:* And the ſame St. *Paul* makes it the buſineſs of a whole *Chapter* to ſhew that the performing the publick ſervice of God, and particularly Praying in an unknown Tongue, are contrary to edification; from which premiſſes the concluſion is plain, That the *Apoſtles* themſelves had no Authority to appoint the ſervice of God to be performed in an unknown Tongue; and ſurely it is Arrogance for the Church in any Age to pretend to greater Authority than the Apoſtles had.

This is the ſumm of what our *Adverſaries* ſay in juſtification of themſelves in theſe points. And there is no doubt, but that men of wit and confidence will always make a ſhift to ſay ſomething for any thing; and ſome way or other blanch over the blackeſt and moſt abſurd things in the world. But I leave it to the judgment of mankind whether any thing be more unreaſonable than to tell men in effect, that it is fit they ſhould underſtand as little of Religion as is poſſible; that God hath publiſhed a very dangerous Book, with which it is not ſafe for the people to be familiarly acquainted; that

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our bleſſed *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* and the ancient *Chriſtian* Church for more than ſix hundred years were not wiſe managers of Religion, nor prudent diſpenſers of the Scriptures; but like fond and fooliſh Fathers put a knife and a ſword into the hands of their Children, with which they might eaſily have foreſeen what miſchef they would do to themſelves and others. And who would not chuſe to be of ſuch a Church which is provided of ſuch excellent and effectual means of Ignorance, ſuch wiſe and infallible methods for the prevention of knowledge in the people, and ſuch variety of cloſe ſhutters to keep out the light?

I have choſen to inſiſt upon this Argument, becauſe it is ſo very plain, that the moſt ordinary capacity may judge of this uſage and dealing with the ſouls of men: which is ſo very groſs that every man muſt needs be ſenſible of it; becauſe it toucheth men in the common rights of humane nature, which belong to them as much as the light of heaven, and the air we breath in.

It requires no ſubtilty of wit, no skill in Antiquity, to underſtand theſe Controverſies between Us and the Church of *Rome*. For there are no *Fathers* to be pretended

tended on both ſides in theſe Queſtions: They yield we have Antiquity on ours: And we refer it to the common ſenſe of Mankind, which Church, that of *Rome* or *Ours*, hath all the right and reaſon in the world on her ſide in theſe debates? And, who they are that tyrannize over Chriſtians, the Governours of their Church or ours; who uſe the people like ſons and freemen, and who like ſlaves; who feed the flock of Chriſt committed to them, and who take the Childrens bread from them? Who they are that when their Children ask bread, for bread give them a ſtone, and for an egg a ſerpent; I mean the *Legends* of their *Saints* inſtead of the Holy *Scriptures*, which are able to make men wiſe unto ſalvation: And who they are that lie moſt juſtly under the ſuſpicion of Errours and Corruptions, they who bring their Doctrine and Practices into the open light, and are willing to have them tryed by the true touchſtone, the *Word of God*; or they who ſhun the light, and decline all manner of tryal and examination? and who are moſt likely to carry on a worldly deſign, they who drive a trade of ſuch mighty gain, and advantage under pretence of Religion, and make ſuch markets of the ignorance and ſins of the people;

people; or we whom malice it ſelf cannot charge with ſerving any worldly deſign by any allowed Doctrine or Practice of our Religion? For we make no money of the miſtakes of the people, nor do we fill their heads with vain fears of new places of torment to make them willing to empty their purſes in a vainer hope of being delivered out of them. We do not like them pretend a mighty bank and treaſure of Merits in the Church, which they ſell to the people for ready money, giving them bills of Exchange from the *Pope* to *Purgatory*; when they who grant them, have no reaſon to believe they will avail them, or be accepted in the other World.

For our parts we have no fear that our people ſhould underſtand Religion too well: We could wiſh, with *Moſes, that all the Lord's people were Prophets:* We ſhould be heartily glad the people would reade the holy Scriptures more diligently, being ſufficiently aſſured that it is their own fault if they learn any thing but what is good from thence: We have no Doctrines or Practices contrary to Scripture, and conſequently no occaſion to keep it cloſe from the ſight of the people, or to hide any of the Commandments of God from them: We leave theſe mean arts to thoſe who ſtand in need of them. In

In a word, there is nothing which God hath ſaid to men, which we deſire ſhould be concealed from them; Nay, we are willing the people ſhould examine what we teach, and bring all our Doctrines *to the Law and to the Teſtimony*; that if they be not according to *this Rule*, they may neither believe them nor us. 'Tis onely things falſe and adulterate which ſhun the light and fear the touchſtone. We have that ſecurity of the truth of our Religion, and of the agreeableneſs of it to the word of God; that honeſt confidence of the goodneſs of our Cauſe, that we do not forbid the people to reade the beſt Books our Adverſaries can write againſt it.

And now let any impartial man judge whether this be not a better argument of a good Cauſe, to leave men at liberty to try the grounds of their Religion, than the courſes which are taken in the Church of *Rome*, to awe men with an *Inquiſition*; and, as much as is poſſible, to keep the common people in Ignorance, not onely of what their late Adverſaries, the *Proteſtants*, but their chief and ancient Adverſary, the *Scriptures*, have to ſay againſt them.

A man had need of more than common ſecurity of the skill and integrity of thoſe

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to whom he perfectly reſigns his underſtanding; this is too great a Truſt to be repoſed in humane frailty, and too ſtrong a temptation to others to impoſe upon us; to abuſe our blindneſs, and to make their own ends of our voluntary Ignorance and eaſie credulity. This is ſuch a folly as if a rich man ſhould make his Phyſician his heir; which is to tempt him either to deſtroy him or to let him die, for his own intereſt. So he that truſts the care of his ſoul with other men, and at the ſame time by *irrevocable Deed* ſettles his underſtanding upon them, lays too great a temptation before them to ſeduce and damn him for their own ends.

And now to reflect a little upon our ſelves. What cauſe have we to bleſs God who are ſo happily reſcued from that more than *Egyptian* darkneſs and bondage, wherein this Nation was detained for ſeveral Ages; who are delivered out of the hands of thoſe cruel task-maſters, who required brick without ſtraw; that men ſhould be religious without competent underſtanding, and work out their own ſalvation while they denied them the means of all others the moſt neceſſary to it; who are ſo uncharitable as to allow us no ſalvation out of their Church, and yet

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ſo unreaſonable as to deny us the very beſt means of ſalvation when we are in it?

Our Fore-fathers thought it a mighty privilege to have the Word of God reſtored to them, and the publick prayers and ſervice of God celebrated in a known Tongue: Let us uſe this ineſtimable privilege with great modeſty and humility; not to the nouriſhing of pride and ſelf-conceit, of diviſion and faction; but as the *Apoſtle* exhorts, *Let the word of God dwell richly in you, in all wiſedom; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, unto which ye are called in one body; and be ye thankfull.*

It concerns us mightily (with which admonition I ſhall conclude) both for the honour and ſupport of our Religion, to be at better union among our ſelves, and not to divide about leſſer things: and ſo to demean our ſelves, as to take from our Adverſaries all thoſe pretences whereby they would juſtifie themſelves, or at leaſt extenuate the guilt of that heavy charge, which falls every whit as juſtly upon them as ever it did upon the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, of *taking away the key of knowledge, and ſhutting the kingdom of heaven againſt men; neither going in themſelves, nor ſuffering thoſe that are entring to go in.*

FINIS.